

St. GASPAR BERTONI



Biblical and Theological Reflections

on his

APOSTOLIC MISSION

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2000

Electronic Edition: Tereza Lopes [Lay Stigmatine] – 2014
Latter revision on November, 2016

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[First Anniversary of the Founder's Canonization [Nov. 1, 1989];

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[Extract from the ANGELICUM LXVII (1990), pp. 87-108]

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[The English Original of an article published in Italian,
as: *L'inabitazione divina: sorgente e scopo della Missione Apostolica*, in:
Compendio di teologia spirituale in onore di Jordan Aumann, OP
Roma: PUST 1992, pp. 121-142
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The End

St. GASPAR BERTONI
Biblical and Theological Reflections
on his
APOSTOLIC MISSION FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF BISHOPS

Introduction: A Johannine Perspective
 [Jn 20:19-23]

"... In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them: 'Peace be with you!' - and showed them His hands and His side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and He said to them again: 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, so am I sending you.' After saying this, He breathed on them and said: 'receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained...' [cf. Jn 20:19, ff.].

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[1] Considering Sacred Scripture globally, it can easily be seen that there is an intimate connection between the Mission of Jesus Christ, received directly from His Father - and the Mission of all Christians, received in Baptism from Jesus Christ. The Mission of each follower of Jesus Christ is simply a participation in the very Mission of Jesus Himself. This is particularly emphasized in **the Fourth Gospel and the writings attributed to John**.

[2] The expressions: "**AS... SO**", comparing Jesus to His Father, and His disciples to Jesus, is found relatively often in the Gospel of John, in a wide variety of relationships:

[a] Life:

"... **AS I who am sent by the Living Father, Myself draw life from the Father, SO whoever eats Me will draw life from Me...**" [cf. Jn 6:57].

[b] Knowledge:

"... **I am the Good Shepherd; I know My own, and My own know me, JUST as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep...**" [cf. Jn 10:14, ff.].

[c] Love:

"... **AS the Father has loved Me, SO I have loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, JUST AS I have kept My Father's commandments, and remain in His love...**" [cf. Jn 15:19].

"... Father, may they be one in Us, AS You are in Me, and I am in You, so that the world may believe it was You Who sent Me. I have given them the glory You gave Me, that they be one as We are one. With Me in them, and You in Me, may they be so completely one that the world will realize that it was you Who sent Me, and that I have loved them AS much as You loved Me..." [cf. Jn 17:21-23].

[d] Unity:

"...may they be One in us AS we are one..." [cf. Jn 17:22].

[3] This grammatical construction offers a three-fold relationship:

[a] Between Jesus and His Father: this is a particular fascination in Jn's Gospel: there is a repeated insistence by Jesus Himself on His subservience, loving obedience, to the Father, so that it would seem that this is a threefold of a great mystery:

"... My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work..." [cf. Jn 4:34].

I tell you most solemnly, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees the Father doing; and whatever the Father does the Son does, too..."[cf. Jn 5:19].

"... I can do nothing of myself; I can only judge as I am told to judge, and my judging is just, because my aim is not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me..." [v. 29, f.].

"... I have come in the name of my Father..." [v. 43].

"...I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of the one who sent me..." [cf. Jn 6:38].

"... Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. Yet, I have not come of myself; no, there is One who sent me, and I really come from him, and you do not know him, but I know him, because I have come from him, and it was he who sent me..." [cf. Jn 7:28, ff.].

Jn 8:

"... I am not alone: the One Who sent Me is with me [v. 16] ... I may be testifying on My own behalf, but the Father Who sent me is My witness, too.... You do not know Me, nor do you know My Father; if you did know Me, you would know My Father as well [vv. 17, ff.].... The One Who sent Me is truthful, and what I have learnt from Him I declare in the world [v. 26] ... When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself: what the Father has taught me is what I preach; He Who sent me is

with Me and has not left me to myself, for I always do what pleases Him [v. 28] ... What I for my part, speak of, is what I have seen with My Father; but you, you put into action the lessons learnt from you father [v. 38]... When I tell you the truth, as I have learnt it from God [v. 40]... I have done here from God; yes, I have come from Him; not that I came because I chose, no, I was sent by him [v. 42]... I honor My Father [v. 49] ... Not that I care for my own glory... If I were to seek my own glory, that would be no glory at all; My glory is conferred by the Father, by the one of whom you say: He is our God, although you do not know him [v. 54]... But I know him, and I faithfully keep His word...: [v. 55].

"...I lay down my life of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command that I have been given by My Father..." [cf. Jn 10:18]

:... For what I have spoken does not come of my self; no, what I was to say, what I had to speak, was commanded by the Father who sent me, and I know that his commandments mean eternal life. And therefore, what the Father has told me, is what I speak.

"... If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love .. I have made known to you everything that I have learnt from my Father..." [cf. Jn 15:10, 15].

[b] Between Jesus and His Disciples:

"... A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master's business; I call you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me; no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last and then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. What I command you, is to love one Another..." [cf. Jn 15:12-19, passim].

[c] Between the Father, through Jesus, in the Holy Spirit to the Baptized: each of the faithful are commissioned to an Apostolic Mission.

[4] The Christian "Mission", as Christian: "Life", "knowledge", "love", and "unity" are all realities of the redeemed life and have their origin in Jesus Christ, the First-Born of the dead.

[a] The Christian Mission is a transmission of life, and is not only the communication of a task to perform, or a message to deliver. It is a life to live, a Person to seek, as is evident in the sending of the Apostles, after showing them the Glorious Stigmata:

"... as the Father has sent me, I send you..." [cf. Jn 20:19, ff.]

"... As I who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so, whoever eats Me, will life from me..." [cf. Jn 6:57].

[b] Jesus was "sent" by His Father, not by means of a simple command - but, the ideal "Mission" has a verbal expression of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father - and also expresses His birth in time, from Mary:

"... The Word was made flesh and He lived among us..." [cf. Jn 1:14].

[5] The Mission of Jesus, from all eternity from the Heavenly Father, seems to have been one of His central thoughts all throughout His earthly existence. His Mission is a privileged "expression" of the eternal love of the Father:

"... And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth and finished the work you sent me to do. Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify Me with that glory I had with you before the world was. I have made you name known to the men you took from the world to give me. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now at last they know that all you have given me comes indeed from you; for I have given them the teaching you gave me, and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you, and they have believed that it was you who sent me..." [cf. Jn 17:3, ff.].

[6] The intimate connection between the eternal Mission of Jesus, and His Incarnation in time, has been clearly seen by St. Paul:

"... God dealt with sin by sending His own Son in a body as physical as any sinful body, and in that body, God condemned sin... Since God did not spare His own son, but gave Him up to benefit us all, we may be certain that after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything that he can give..." [cf. Rm 8:3, 32].

"... Now before we came of age we were as good as slaves to the elemental principle of this world - but, when the appointed time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law, and to enable us to be adopted as sons. The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his son into your hearts: the Spirit that cries ABBA, Father - and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a slave any more; and if God has made you son, then he has made you heir..." [cf. Ga 4:4, ff.].

[7] The unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews offers a similar insight:

"... God has never said to any angel: ' You are my son, today I have become your Father'; or, 'I will be a Father to Him and He as Son to Me' ..." [cf. Heb 1:5; Ps 2:7; 2 S 7:14].

"... This is what He said on coming into the world: You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, prepared a body for me. You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin; then I said just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book: 'God, here I am! I am coming to do your will!' [cf. Heb 10:5-7; cf. also Ps 40:6-8, LXX].

[8] All Christian Mission, therefore, is clearly identified with that of Jesus Christ, received from the Father, in the Holy Spirit. It is a call that will lead one beyond and above his own innate abilities. The grace of vocation inspires a certain 'capacity' for Christ-likeness that is merely a passive potency bestowed on each human being at creation. St. Paul explained to the Philippians that the Lord Himself will bring this 'good work' to fulfillment:

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

[9] Fr. Bertoni cited this passage many times in his letters. However, there is a very special text in his original Constitutions which sheds much light on his exalted idea of the Apostolic Mission for the assistance of Bishops:

"...Since the scope of our Congregation is to serve the Church [*obsequium praestare*] with the various ministries of its vocation under the direction of the Bishops; and since this, at times, proves to be an arduous and difficult undertaking ... however, we believe that realization does not depend on human strength alone, but on the grace of the Holy Spirit: 'since the One Who began this good work, He Himself will see to it that it is finished', whenever keeping it going is simply beyond our powers. this is, in fact, **the special grace of our vocation**, a grace which is stronger than every danger and difficulty..." [CF 185 - based on Suarez].

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Section One

St. GASPAR BERTONI'S REFLECTIONS ON THE INTRA-TRINITARIAN MISSIONS: A TRINITARIAN - CHRISTOLOGICAL - EUCHARISTIC CHARISM

"... All depends on forming the resolution to wish to serve God in any manner whatsoever... [*qualunque*. [cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, MP: July 30, 1808].

"...during Mass today, at Communion, I experienced for a moment a kind of detachment of my spirit from all that is created, in the service [*in ossequio*] of the Creator...[MP July 2, 1808].

Presentation:

[1] It seems that for St. Gaspar Bertoni, the Stigmatine Founder, that the essential charism - the core of his spirituality, was that of forming Jesus Christ within us, by the specific means of our **obsequium**, total service, to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our abandonment to the Most Holy Trinity is expressed through our **obsequium** of the Church through her Bishops. Fr. Bertoni expressed something of this idea when he wrote to Pope Gregory XVI, offering the property of the community for what the Stigmatine Founder believed would be for a greater service of the Church. In part, his letter reads:

"... We offer this ... if it should seem to the Holy Spirit, and to You, O Blessed Father, that our work might be of service [*ossequio*] to Christ our Lord, and to be of some use to His Church..." [cf. Ep, p. 340].

[a] As has been noted, for Fr. Bertoni 'perfection', which is born of charity, consists in the following/imitation/the "mind" of Christ Jesus [cf. Panegyric in honor of St. Francis Assisi, in: Mss B # 1796].

[b] He once wrote in his Diary: "We should draw a portrait in ourselves of Jesus Christ..." [cf. MP Feb. 26, 1809].

[c] Perhaps implicit in this thought of making a portrait of Jesus Christ, there are also present ideas such as graduality, development, growth, progress. The portrait of Christ, sacramentally begun in Baptismal "configuration", more and more takes shape as one responds to the Stigmatine life. A **portrait** is not made in an instant, as would be an immediately developing photograph. A portrait of Jesus Christ would demand time, patience, reflection, maturation, correction, the experience of the life of Jesus, especially in His suffering, shame and resurrection.

[d] This idea of the painting of a master-piece is also found in his Original Constitutions as a convincing motive for community charity:

"... Nothing helps the love of true charity more toward a person than to discern in that person the outstanding traits of the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the contemplating of the other person as an image of God, painted with the most beautiful colors of grace..." [CF 223 - based on Suarez].

[e] A similar idea is present in one of his letters to Fr. Bragato:

"... Read the Gospel often, and from the deeds and words of Christ our Lord, squeeze out with reflection and meditation, and apply to yourself, whatever is necessary for the circumstances in which you actually find yourself. Form yourself on that model, upon Whom all the saints made their copes..." [cf. Letter 3 to Fr. Bragato, Ep p. 313].

[2] In the patient spirituality of Fr. Bertoni, this model of Jesus was drawn gradually, painstakingly, in correspondence to the daily graces encountered in the routine of life. Fr. Stofella has remarked:

"... n Fr. Bertoni, abandonment to God could already be looked upon as a loving exercise of virtue even before it appeared in him as a distinct life-style, initiated with the particular grace of his vocation. It seems that this vocation of his made itself manifest little by little. It appeared in the first years of his priesthood, as one of his contemporaries [Fr. Matthew Farinati] stated, following his reading of the biography of the 'Saint of Divine Providence', Cajetan of Thiene. However, this Holy Abandonment developed markedly through Fr. Bertoni's personal study of St. Ignatius Loyola, particularly through his reading of the biography of St. Ignatius, written by the Jesuit, Fr. Anthony Francis Mariani..." [cf. CS IV, p. 63].

[a] The date of birth that the Congregation commonly considers its own is November 4, 1816. Therefore, this letter written to Fr. Bragato, telling him about the writing of the Constitutions - is dated almost twenty-five years later. Forced by Divine Providence so often to be 'nailed' to his bed, 'wounded, but not dead' - for the last decade or more of his life, Fr. Bertoni finally came to the writing of a Rule for the community. He did this only after sharing common life with his companions for nearly a quarter of a century. As an invalid, "home-bound", in his last illness, he made the first attempt to codify his ideal.

[f] Furthermore, even with this long experience, Fr. Bertoni was writing the Constitutions from his "solitary confinement", "drop by drop", little by little. This was due not only to the painful illness and debilitating state of his general health, which was most evident - but, also because of the spiritual principle of 'never preceding the will of God', but of "allowing God to work within him ever more and more. As has been pointed out in another study of this series [cf. *St. Gaspar Bertoni and Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ. Reflections and Comparisons*] the Original Constitutions of St. Gaspar seem to be short pithy paragraphs, copied *verbatim* from Suarez, used perhaps as the

Stigmatine Founder's meditation and served as the basic Code for his Constitutions. The large majority of the numbers of the Original Constitutions have Fr. Suarez as their immediate source.

[g] It is to the biblical and dogmatic background of his charism to which we now turn.

• • •

1. The grace of Fr. Bertoni's life was a personal Trinitarian, Christological, Eucharistic and Ecclesial charism. His Apostolic Mission developed powerfully from these sources. It seems that a 'multiform' grace gave the tonality to the fundamental attitudes of the Stigmatine Founder. His sense of 'all' - of 'totality' - in his life-long seeking God alone, his consuming sense of Mission - all of these profound realities in his life seem to be deeply radicated in these central mysteries of the faith.

a. The Most Holy Trinity, Jesus, and the Eucharist - were not for him merely manifestations of a personal piety, expressed in prescribed, regular devotional exercises. The Christological, Trinitarian and Eucharistic roots of Fr. Bertoni are both deep and eminently personal. They seem to be embedded in the particular grace of his unique vocation, received through the love of God. Some indication of this might be present in a powerful text, already noted above:

"... Today I was at St. Joseph's Convent. The thought came over me that at the depths of one's being, one finds God. While pondering over sublime thoughts about God, there came a deeper understanding of myself.

"... This evening, I came across an image of the Most Holy Trinity, which inspired much reverence and love for the three Persons. The eternal Father, Who was standing with His arms extended, explained His mercy to me, and the generous communications of His gifts...

"... The Breviary was said then with much devotion and for the glory of God..." [cf. MP, Aug. 24, 1808].

b. It might be said that one way of contemplating the divine personality is to think of God as a **total Self-giving**, or Communication. Fr. Bertoni often expressed himself in the context of the Eucharist, as being moved by the sublime mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. The response of Fr. Bertoni to his vocation was 'more than ordinary', strong and ever-present. It seems that his profound attraction for God resulted from his deep faith and hopeful love. In his view, true Christian personality is established sacramentally, building on the gifts of creation - and develops by a life long gift of oneself: 'the extended arms of the Eternal Father, and the generous communication of His gifts' seem to have served Fr. Bertoni as a Model for the Stigmatine response to the Apostolic Mission. The Most Blessed Trinity for him was a

profound force, passionately lived, which transformed him through the long years of his life.

2. His Spiritual Diary offers some indications of this Trinitary attraction, this intimacy, internal joy - accompanied so often by consolations, even tears - that inspired him in the long years of physical, spiritual and apostolic reversals. The Blessed Trinity pervaded his personality, and inspired his practical decisions:

"... the Meditation today was on the Incarnation. There were sentiments of gratitude toward the Most Holy Trinity, and of correspondence toward Jesus. I was already obliged to love Him even before He became man: how much more am I now obliged..."

[MP, Sept. 27, 1808].

a. The Trinitarian Grace in the life of the Stigmatine Founder seems also to have had as its scope that of on-going "conversion", i.e., it inspired his yearning for spiritual depth and development, his radical transformation. The contemplation on the Trinity sheds much light on the Stigmatine vocation and the Apostolic Mission. These are radicated in the mysteries of the trinity and the Person of Jesus, and are nourished in a particular manner, by the Eucharist. The vocation and the Apostolic Mission of the Stigmatine, as for all Christians, are "sacramentalized", "presented" in the Eucharist, and expressed in a privileged manner through union with God and obedience to the Church, through her bishops.

b. Fr. Bertoni's devotion to the Blessed Trinity is not merely a summary of his prayerful exercises, or spiritual practices. His faith in the trinity indicates a fundamental inclination of his mind, or disposition of his heart: a very basic, particular form of his prayerful praise of God. His prayer was some indication of his devotion, in the fullest sense of that word. Quoting St. Thomas Aquinas [II-II, q. 82, a. 1, C.], Fr. Bertoni explains 'devotion' as "service", ***obsequium*** - an idea rooted in the teaching of St. Francis de Sales:

"...true devotion consists in a will ready to give of itself to God and to be dedicated to those things which pertain the more to His service..." [cf. PVC, p. 203].

c. The fundamental idea of Stigmatine service in the Church, the Apostolic Mission of Fr. Bertoni, was born of this faith of his in the Most Blessed Trinity. The Lord Himself - particularly through the Eucharist and the Scriptures ["written by the same Holy Spirit who chooses the Bishops"] - were very real to Fr. Bertoni. He was graced by a profound sense of the "presence" of God:

"... Tonight, there were feelings of pardon. There was a great sentiment toward the Most Holy Trinity in giving us the Son, and great tenderness toward

Him, together with a very vivid faith and a profound desire for union; and of association in His sufferings and shame; all this was accompanied by a petition of the grace to suffer and to be disdained for Him...'

[MP, Sept. 28, 1808].

d. All "Mission" seems to begin with an initial vision, or insight, which sheds much light on its content. For the Stigmatine, the "Apostolic Mission" for the Assistance [*ossequio*] of Bishops was initially seen in a Trinitarian key:

"... During Mass today, at the Consecration, there were rather vivid sentiments of the presence of Christ, as that of a friend who speaks with another friend - and further, of the Presence of the Father. And experiencing in a certain manner the distinction of these divine Persons in one and the same nature, there were great reverence and love. These lasted for about a half hour after the recollection..." [MP, Jan. 11, 1809].

3. It may be said that the Stigmatine Founder, by Divine Providence, had so many hours, days, weeks and months and entire years - given to contemplation, 'nailed as he was to his bed', 'wounded, but not dead'. The 'atrocious sufferings' of his life, pondered within the context of his contemplative prayer, brought him to being 'transformed' the more into His Crucified Lord. From his 'experience' of Jesus Christ, a deeper insight into the mystery of the Trinity was afforded, coupled with the light of his prayer. More and more, Fr. Bertoni came to concentrate on the Person of Jesus Christ, rendered ever more 'incarnate' to him by the long sufferings he endured.

a. Fr. Bertoni was fascinated by this central mystery of Christianity, and he saw everything as flowing from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, echoing them, and culminating in them. The Person of Jesus served him as a kind of 'mirror' - which reflected the inner life of God, and offered a Model for his own life. The special grace of his vocation - providentially formed throughout his long life by the experiences he had - brought him gradually to the idea of sharing ever more deeply in the Apostolic Mission of Jesus Christ, also in His suffering. His long experiences of God' were impregnated with the grace of his particular vocation - all the graces received from God were accepted in his own personality, formed through the years.

b. The charism of a Founder is analogically like a Eucharistic Consecration: the words of Consecration, the words of Jesus Himself, bring about a new reality to the common matter. Many individuals in the history of humanity had the same - and even more difficulty - experiences as Fr. Bertoni endured: physical, moral and spiritual sufferings. However, the particular grace of his vocation, together with the set-backs and consolations that he knew, transformed many natural elements in his life into occasions of even richer graces:

"...The Feast of the Sacred Heart. During Mass today, at the Consecration and Communion, and throughout the whole time of thanksgiving, I experienced tears of compunction and much affection. Particularly at the Communion, I experienced for an instant, a kind of detachment from all that was created, for the service [*ossequio* of the Creator..." [MP, July 2, 1808].

c. Perhaps one might also compare the charism of a Founder to the various senses of Sacred Scripture: the events of any given day, or period, will find their "fuller sense" only in the Person of Jesus, revealed in the word of God, contemplated and studied each day, and celebrated and shared in the Most Blessed sacrament.

4. The 'difficult grace' of his particular vocation flows from the light of the Most Blessed Trinity. Grace, which always presupposes nature, led the Stigmatine Founder more and more to reflect on the unity in the plurality of the love of God - on His 'kind purposes', His eternal Plan for the salvation of the world. The mystery of the Triune God is the heart of the charism of Fr. Bertoni:

"... One maxim alone, sufficiently meditated, is enough to save me: many things, even though they are convincing, confuse the mind, and do not move it to make practical resolutions. 'Just Father, the world has not known you, and does not want to know God as just. It would prefer a God by halves.' [MP, March 13, 1809].

a. For Fr. Bertoni, it was the "total Christ" - His own inner fullness, the great demand of his words and deeds. Furthermore, *Christus totalis*, in the language of St. Augustine, would also include the Church - instituted by Christ, to continue His Apostolic Mission until the end of time.

b. His Trinitarian, Christological, Eucharistic inspiration brought Fr. Bertoni far from his confining arm-chair, his bed and poor room, in which he was 'imprisoned' physically for so many years. Spiritually, his Apostolic Mission carried him to the 'most distant isles' of this world. The Apostolic mission is world-wide in scope: ***anywhere in the Diocese and the world.***

c. By nature, Fr. Bertoni was a reflective man, much taken up with the passing nature of things - particularly after the most painful experiences he had as a child in the deaths of people he dearly loved and with whom he lived - the separation of his parents - the many years of his own physical sufferings - the apparent failure of his community. Restless in his missionary reflection, he was not 'quieted' except with the total vision, and the ever deeper consideration of reality. He looked on life in its over-all picture, in its global sense, in its deepest relationship, in its most profound reality:

"... To seek God alone, to see God in all things - this is to make oneself above all human things..." [MP, July 30, 1808].

d. He was also a practical man, a diocesan priest dedicated with the best gifts of his mind and heart, to the 'local Church', his native diocese of Verona. His was a profound desire to serve his diocese, in any manner whatsoever possible to him. His own life remains the most convincing testimony that we have of the multiplicity of his activities he codified in his Rule. When he could no longer walk, he would be carried Friday evenings to the pulpit to preach the services in honor of the Five Wounds. When he could no longer go out of his room, he invited priests, seminarians and missionaries to it, to preach the Spiritual Exercises to them. During these years of confinement, he also shared his great dream with his followers, the Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops, in the form of conversation, meditations, conferences. His extensive writings bear witness to the life-long quest to which he had dedicated himself in his search for the will of God:

"... All depends on forming the resolution of wanting to serve God in any manner whatsoever [*qualunque*]. It is so necessary to be on guard against mere wishful thinking. Velleity of will can be discerned in the effect produced; the former gives in to difficulty, whereas genuine will power is made known in the reaction to difficulty; it gets stronger, stabilizes itself, is strengthened..." [MP, July 30, 1808].

e. The image of the Triune God, in Whom we are created and called, became for Fr. Bertoni a lived reality, that was eventually codified. His 'Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops', his prayer, his sacramental life - everything for him was an expression of his vocation to continue the Trinitary action of grace in the Church, in the lives of those who came within the scope of his apostolate. The apostolate was for him a continuation of the eternal mission of God - fraternal love was an expression of the life of the Trinity among human beings - prayer was a reflection of the eternal contemplation of God, which expressed itself in the Incarnate Word:

"... it is necessary to make manifest in ourselves to the divine Father an image of His Divine Son..." [cf. MP, July 30, 1809].

"... Today there was a rather vivid sentiment, reverential love, of the presence of the Father, at the *Te igitur* of the Mass, and a vivid confidence and love toward the son... At the consecration, there was also a sentiment of the priestly dignity, making the Person of Christ present to His father..." [cf. MP, Dec. 11, 1808].

"... Christmas Day 1808: In the three Masses today, I experienced much recollection; and sentiments concerning the grand benefit of a vocation. What

a great good it is to forget and to despoil oneself of all that is created to seek Christ alone. How God honors and loves His humiliated Son. And what debt is ours to do for him, at least in part, that which He first did for us. Frequent memory today of the life of Christ, accompanied by a tender love of correspondence. During Mass, at the Consecration, rather vivid and affectionate sentiments of the presence of Christ.

"- There were dispositions to accept even the shame of Christ..." [cf. MP, Feb. 1, 1809]

5. The entire Mission of Jesus in this world may be looked upon as a kind of 'expression' of the inner life of the Trinity, or a kind of ; sacrament', revealing the eternal love of God:

"... Since God did not spare His only Son, but gave Him up to benefit us all, we may be certain that after such a gift that He will not refuse anything He can give.." [cf. Rm 8:32].

a. Fr. Bertoni's spirituality was not limited to praising the Triune God, or to praying. He deeply felt that he personally was associated with the divine community, and that he had been called personally to share in It, and to bring the Good News concerning It to the whole world. His Trinitarian Mission may be looked upon as the extension towards the Church of the inspiration through which the Father sends His son, and the Personal Love between them, the Holy Spirit.

b. Fr. Bertoni's "Dark Night", "Spiritual Winter", were also experienced in having this sublime faith of sharing vitally in the Trinity - and then to see the communication of this joy so often apparently hindered on the human level, thwarted by so much sickness, or the frustrating circumstances of his times, so unfavorable to his ideal.. His life was, eminently, "Eucharistic", but he was hardly ever able to be 'distributed' as he would have liked in the Apostolic Mission.

c. However, even with all this, he freely accepted and even willed this special share in the life of Jesus. He expressed this through his characteristic holy abandonment. He was deeply convinced personally that his own life was a privileged share with the Christ in His agony in the Garden, sweating blood. His was a following of Christ that was at the cost of some of his most ardent ecclesial hopes. But, his was a life that drew him daily more closely to Jesus Christ:

"... I observed the disciples sleeping while Christ was in His agony, sweating blood for them..." [cf. MP, July 5, 1808].

"A greater tenderness and a more profound humility in holding Christ right in my hands, immediately after the Consecration..." [MP, Dec. 11, 1808].

"Meditation and following - A desire and an expressed petition for Martyrdom. There was great interior inspiration..." [cf. MP, Sept. 28, 1808].

d. Fr. Bertoni interpreted the life of the Most Holy Trinity within himself as essentially the habitual inspiration to give of himself for the establishment, the betterment of the Church. "All that mattered", he once said, "is that God be served!". He saw the genuine Christian personality consists in the giving of oneself, surrendering oneself to the Father's will, of offering oneself for the establishment of the other. His great hope was to send numerous and qualified Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops to serve the Church, in accord with her various and changing needs. To share in the life of the Trinity for him meant to be sent.

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SECTION TWO

The Personal Mission of Jesus Christ - Available to the Father

"Meditation: The reign of Christ. I experienced a powerful inspiration to follow our Lord more closely, even at the cost of life, especially in His poverty and shame...' [cf. MP, Sept. 25, 1808].

In presenting this aspect, three points might be considered:

- [A] Biblical Spirituality
- [B] Biblical Presentation of Jesus
- [C] Fr. Bertoni's Thought.

[A] Biblical Spirituality

A variety of points might be presented here from a random reading of frequently recurring texts:

1. **Union with Christ**: this aspect is basic to all Christians. However, the Apostolic Missionary would look on Jesus as particularly close, united to the Mission:

"... I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly ..." [cf. Jn 10:10].

"... I am the vine, you are the branches ..." [cf. Jn 15:5].

"... I betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ..." cf. 2 Co 11:2]

"... Partakers of the Divine Nature...' [cf. 2 P 1:4].

2. **Imitation of Christ**:

"... I have given you an example, that AS I have done to you, SO you should also do [cf. Jn 13:15]

"... Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ' Jesus... Who emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave ..." [cf. Ph 2:5, ff.].

"... Blessed are the poor... those who mourn ... those who suffer persecution..." [cf. Mt 5:3, ff.].

3. Apostolic Service

"... The Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many..." [cf. Mt 2:28].

"...Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave..." [cf. Mt 20:27].

"...Let yourselves be like men waiting for their master's return..." [cf. Lk 12:36].

"... Blessed is the faithful and prudent servant..." [cf. Lk 12:42].

4. Personal Spirituality

"... My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, to accomplish His work...' [cf. Jn 4:34].

"...For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother..." [cf. Mt 12:50].

"... I have come down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me, the Father..." [cf. Jn 6:38].

"... May the God of Peace ... fill you with every good thing to do His will..." [cf. Heb 13:21].

"... live no longer according to the lusts of men, but according to the Will of God..." [cf. 1 P 4:2].

"... He who does the will of God, lives forever ..." [cf. 1 Jn 2:17].

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In Fr. Bertoni's spirituality, there is a clear insistence on the 'obediential' aspects of Jesus Christ. A close reading of Scripture allows for a profound insight into this aspect: "Jesus" is a loving, obedient response to His Father.

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[B] Biblical Presentation of Jesus Christ

Under this heading, the following outline will be considered:

[I] Jesus' Mission

The Father's Envoy

The Paradox of the Incarnation

Jesus and His Father

The Scope of the Mission: Life

The Father's Glory

[II] Jesus' Existence as Obedient Response ["Constitutional Filiation"]

Filial Obedience

Trinitarian "Obedience"

Stigmatine Obedience.

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[I] Jesus' Mission

[cf. F. M. Braun, *OP, Jean le théologien*, Vol. 3, 1].

1. **The Father's Envoy:** in a given moment in history, the light of God shone on this world in a totally new splendor:

"...the light has come into the world..." [cf. Jn 3:19].

"...I, the Light, have come into the world, so that whoever believes in Me need not stay in the dark any more..." [cf. Jn 12:46].

John also uses the word "Life" to describe the coming of Jesus:

"...That life was made visible: we saw it and we are giving testimony telling you of the eternal life which was with the Father and has been made visible to us..." [cf. 1 Jn 1:2].

- a. Throughout, Jesus seems to show a sense of deference:

"... Yet I have not come of myself; no, there is one who sent me, and I really came from him..." [cf. Jn 7:28].

"...I have come from him; not that I came because I chose; no, I was sent and by him ..." [cf. Jn 8:42].

"... I have come in the name of my Father...." [cf. Jn 5:43].

"... When a man's doctrine is his own, he is hoping to get honor for himself; but when he is working for the honor of the one who sent him, then he is sincere..." [cf. Jn 7:18].

"... I honor My Father... not that I care for my own glory...' [cf. Jn 8:50].

b. The whole reason of His coming is His Father: He has simply come to carry out the works His Father gave Him to do" [cf. Jn 5:36]. It is the father Who consecrated and sent Him into this world [cf. Jn 10:36]:

"... and the one who sent me is with me..." [cf. Jn 8:16].

"... the Father who sent me is my witness, too..." [v. 18]

c. Jesus is not merely 'sent' as would be a prophet for a determined action, but He has been sent from 'on high':

"... He who comes from heaven bears witness to the things he has seen and heard, even if his testimony is not accepted..." [cf. Jn 3:31, ff.].

"... I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but to do the will of the one who sent me..." [cf. Jn 6:38].

"... I am from above..."

d. He has been sent so that the world might be saved by Him:

"... For God sent his son into the world, not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved..." [cf. Jn 3:17; 12:47].

"... We ourselves saw and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world..." [cf. 1 Jn 4:14].

e. His coming is in full submission to the Father:

"... for I always do what pleases him ... " [cf. Jn 8:29].

1.] The Father's will is His "Nourishment":

"... My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work..." [cf. Jn 4:34].

2.] Obedience is His attitude unto death:

"... It was for this very reason that I have come unto this hour..." [cf. Jn 12:27].

"... Father, glorify your name... The world must be brought to know that I love the Father and that I am doing exactly what the Father told me..." [cf. Jn 14:31]

f. Jesus does nothing of Himself:

"... When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of myself; what the Father has taught me is what I preach..." [cf. Jn 8:28].

"... what the Father has taught me is what I preach ..." [v. 28].

"... For what I have spoken does not come of myself, no, what I was to say, what I had to speak, was commanded by the Father who sent me, and I know that his commands mean eternal life..." [cf. Jn 12:49, f.].

g. The Mission noted in all these texts is special: never does this Mission separate the One sent from the One sending. The Father who sends His Son into this world never leaves Him alone [cf. Jn 8:29]:

"... And yet, I am not alone for the Father is with me..." [cf. Jn 16:32].

Jesus and the father are always One [cf. Jn 10:30].

"... then you will know for sure that the Father is in me and I am in the Father..." [cf. Jn 10:38].

"... do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? the words that I say to you I do not speak as from myself; it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me..." cf. Jn 14:10, ff.].

"...Father, may they be one in us as you are in me, and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me..." [cf. Jn 17:21].

1.] Between the Father and the Son, this is no point of disjunction:

- the words of Jesus are those of the father [cf. Jn 12:49, f.; 14:10];

- the works of Jesus are those of the Father [cf. Jn 5:17-26; 8:28; 10:25, 37, f.; 14:10].

2.] Not to know this union between the Father and the Son is tantamount to not knowing Jesus:

"... Have I been with you all this time... and you still do not know me...? [cf. Jn 14:9].

h. With the great insistence of His coming into this world, there corresponds also His departure, and His return to His Father [cf. Jn 16:28;; cf. also 6:62; 7:33; 13:3; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 17].

1.] In this return to the Father, He will take up once more the glory that was His before the constitution of the world [cf. Jn 17:5, 24]. Once His terrestrial work is completed [cf. Jn 17:4; 19; 30], He will return from when He came; His **ascent** [*katabasis* - cf. Jn 3:13; 6:33, ff.; 6:22; 20:17]. All this is seen in the light of returning to pertain to the Kingdom on high: "the Son of Man must be lifted up" [cf. Jn 3:13].

2.] All the while that His contemporaries saw Him and listened to Him, His true domain was always the Father's House, where those will be introduced whom He will "draw" to Him:

"... There are many rooms in my Father's House... I am going now to prepare a place for you. I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am, you may be, too..."cf. Jn 14:2-4; cf. 12:32].

3.] His exaltation is as necessary as His descent - for if He does not go, the Paraclete will not come [cf. Jn 14:3, ff.; 16:5-7] - the Streams of Living Water could not otherwise flow out into eternal life [cf. Jn 7:37-39; 4:14].

i. Repeatedly, Jesus expresses the basic idea of His Mission:

"... I have not come of myself; no, there is one who sent me, and I really come from him ... I have come from him and it was he who sent me..." [cf. Jn 7:28, ff.].

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2. The Paradox of the Incarnation [cf. F. M. Braun, OP, pp. 64-67].

a. Jesus of Nazareth appeared eminently human - there was nothing in His words, nor deeds [with the exception of His miracles] that would have led His contemporaries to confess His divine origin. Even after listening to Him, various responses would be forthcoming:

".. When the Christ comes, will he give more signs than this man...?"
[cf. Jn 7:31]

"... There has never been anybody who spoke like he does..." [cf. Jn 7:46].

b. John presents the great paradox in a brief expression: The Word became flesh [cf. Jn 1:14]:

1.] Two extremes are skillfully contrasted: the Word/ flesh, which means a human being capable of suffering, imbued with weakness. Throughout

history, in the long Christological struggles for an acceptable terminology, there have been interpreters who would either sacrifice the **Logos**, or the **flesh** in Christ.

a.] There have been those who thought of the flesh of Jesus as mere "appearance [e.g., the **Docetists**].

b.] Others have looked upon the **Logos** as pre-existing with the Father, as a fiction [as the **Nestorians**].

c.] Both of these extremes would empty the dogma of Jesus Christ of all meaning for the faith.

2.] In the efforts to explain the Paradox, there are those who would make the comparison of a presence of what is hidden, in some distant way comparable to the OT CLOUD [**Kabod Yahweh**], under the Tent of Meeting - the very image used by John to describe the Incarnation: He set up His Tent among us.." [cf. Jn 1:14].

3.] Other OT attempts are the following:

- **Baruch noted that Wisdom had appeared on earth [cf. Ba 3:28];**

- **Sirach noted that Wisdom officiated in the Holy Tent [cf. Si 34:10].**

4.] John also reserves these ideas to the Incarnate Word of God:

- **he contrasts the coming of Jesus as grace and truth [cf. Jn 1:17];**

- **whereas the Law had come through Moses.**

Jesus comes as the Logos, the son of God, the Son of the Father [cf. Jn 1:14], Whom He has made visible and dwelt among us.

c. The faith about God would ask of the believer to maintain that the infinity and the simplicity of God indicate that God is everywhere that He exercises His power: this is His presence of immensity. Immediately, though, there is a paradox:

1.] God may not be seen: "... You cannot see my face ... for man cannot see me and live..." [cf. Ex 33:20].

2.] Yet, Jesus is "transparent": "... whoever sees me, sees the one who sent me..." [cf. Jn 12:45]. - "... If you know me, you know my Father, too. From this moment that you know him and have seen him... To have seen me is to have seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me...?" [cf. Jn 14:7, ff.].

3.] To "see" means to "believe": it is very clear that the discourse here is not with physical sight, but means faith. Faith is an adherence to a Person in this sense. Hence, the primary role of Christ is to make present by means of His Body, the Beginning, the Principle of all.

d. Without ceasing ever to be God, the **Logos** has appeared with a human nature, in a human form. To be united to the Father - means to share in His Power. In His Mission, Jesus remains personally, intimately, united to the Heavenly Father.

e. Jesus repeats many times the OT divinity formula: **I AM**:

- the Bread of Life [cf. 6:35];
- the Bread that came down from heaven [cf. 6:41];
- the Light of the World [cf. 8:12];
- the Resurrection [cf. 6:25];
- the Way, the Truth, the Life [cf. 14:6].

1.] In analyzing these passages, the over-all impression that is received is that Jesus was establishing an emphatic point.

2.] The first person singular pronoun on the lips of Jesus has a precise meaning: it means that the All-Powerfulness of God pertains to Himself. Jesus of Nazareth refers to Himself a number of OT attributes reserved for Yahweh, the NT "Father".

f. Yet, the Mission that Jesus has received, and which He has the consciousness of accomplishing in accord with the Father's will, is clearly and repeatedly in deference to the Father. The indivisible union between the Person of Jesus and His Mission is one of the characteristic notes of the 4th Gospel. It is the unique Person of Jesus which conveys the special message concerning the Father and His Plan. Jesus did not present Himself merely as one more Rabbi - He teaches with unique authority, and asks for a total adherence to the truth:

"... Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth ... I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them..."
[cf. Jn 17:17, 26].

1.] Jesus says only what He has learned from His Father:

"... the one who sent me is truthful, and what I have learnt from him, I declare to the world [cf. Jn 7:26]."

"... I do nothing by myself [v. 28] ... the words I say to you I do not speak as from myself; it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work..." [cf. Jn 14:10].

"...I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father..." [cf. Jn 15:15].

2.] His works are simply those of the Father:

"... The Son can only do what he sees the Father doing ... For the father loves the Son and shows him everything he does himself [cf. Jn 5:20].

"... But my testimony is greater than John's; the works my Father has given me to carry out, these same works of mine testify that the Father has sent me..." [cf. Jn 10:37]

3.] Whoever sees, i.e., believes in Him, "sees" the Father:

"...to have seen me, is to have seen the Father..." [cf. Jn 14:9].

g. The Fourth Gospel is eminently clear on this point" through the humanity of Jesus Christ, which is "transparent" to the eyes of faith, there are the "I" and the "Me" of the unique Son of God. It is the Son of the Father who speaks to humanity through this assumed human nature. It is the Father Who "works" through Him. John places much emphasis on the "I" and the "Me" of Jesus - perhaps still some distance from the definition of Ephesus, but nonetheless clear in its profundity. God speaks and works among humanity through Jesus.

h. Jesus is presented as being born from on high, which leads us to the eternal **Logos**. In full truth, the **Logos** has not "surrendered" His transcendent height, to which a creature could never 'ascend'. His marvelous condescendence: is such that while remaining God [cf. Jn 1:1, ff.], in the intimacy of the Father's heart [cf. Jn 1:18], before the constitution of the world [cf. Jn 17:5, 24] - He has assumed our "human condition" - in all, save sin.



3. Jesus and His Father

a. **Unique Expressions of Unity:** [cf. F. M. Braun, OP, Vol. 3/1, pp. 70, ff.]

1.] Anyone reading the Gospel, or the Letters of John would be struck by the unusual even singular expressions Jesus uses to describe His relationship with his Father. The Synoptics most generally speak of the father as "our", whereas in Jn's Gospel, Jesus emphasizes more **MY** Father, **THE** Father.

a.] One outstanding exception to this would be the Resurrection scene when Jesus tells Mary Magdalen to announce the resurrection:

"...Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But, go and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God..."

[cf. Jn 20:17, ff.].

b.] Jesus' insistence on THE, MY Father indicates His intimate relationship, as well as His distinction as a Person: this way of speaking manifests an incommunicable title. [cf. Jn 1:1; 1 Jn 1:1]. From all eternity [cf. Jn 17:5, 24], Jesus was "with" God [cf. Jn 1:1] - and only the Son has ever seen God [cf. Jn 1:18].

c.] He has come "in the Name of the Father" [cf. Jn 5:43] - He comes from God [cf. Jn 16:27].

d.] Concerning the Father, He remains in a totally "other" relationship with Him than do all other creatures. This unique relationship is the ultimate source of His fullness of grace and truth [cf. Jn 1:14, 16].

2.] It would be most incomplete, and doctrinally unsound, to think of the distinction of the Father and the Son solely in function of revelation. Jesus is indeed the privileged instrument by which God has made Himself known. Along with this distinction between them, there is repeatedly insisted upon their union:

"... The Father and I are one..." [cf. Jn 10:30].

"... The Father is in Me and I am in the Father..." [cf. Jn 10:38].

"...You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason [cf. Jn 17:11 21, ff.].

a.] The formula is markedly Trinitarian. It was destined to play a major role in the Christological controversies. Like so many of the early confessions of faith, it seems to manifest a cultic concern. For the Father and the Son to be truly "one", it is most necessary that the Divinity of the son be recognized.

b.] The title "Son of God" is of the Messianic order, and could be understood "metaphorically". At the end of the 4th Gospel, however, there is the emphatic confession of faith on the part of Thomas: "... **My Lord and My God!**" [cf. Jn 20:28]. This confession goes back to the opening lines of the Prologue: "... In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God, and **the Word was God...**" [cf. Jn 1:1]

c.] There are two special titles which are applied simply to Christ:

- the **Son**: [cf. Jn 3:17, 35, f.; 5:19, ff; 8:36; 14:13; 17:1; 1 Jn 1:2; 2:22, ff.; 4:14];
- the **Only-Begotten** [*Monogene*] [cf. Jn 1:18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn 4:9].

To Jesus, therefore, belong the divine "glory" by natural right [cf. Jn 1:14; 2:12; 11:40; 12:41; 17:5, 24].

2.] Jesus is inseparable from His Father: it is His glory alone that Jesus seeks [cf. Jn 12:28; 14:13; 17:1, 4]. His Mission is to be the Savior of the World [cf. Jn 3:17; 4:42; 1 Jn 4:14]. Since the Mission of the Only Son and His Incarnation are indivisible, His earthly life reveals much concerning the inner life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Christ of the Fourth Gospel always presents to those who believe in Him His divine origin, as well as His earthy nature. He never allows any division between His infinite power from on high - and His inherent weakness of the "flesh".

3.] Jesus totally consumed in Self-Giving to the Father: Jesus, the Only Son of the Father, changes water into wine; heals from afar; forgives sin; opens the eyes of the blind: **obeys unto death**. Having come into this world, it is nonetheless in humility and in suffering, in being exposed to the lack of understanding of His disciples, to the violence of the mob - He consumes Himself in total dedication to the Father's Will:

"... No one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so, it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command that I have received from my Father ..." [cf. Jn 10:18; 12:27; 14:31; 15:10].

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b. Submission to the Father's Will [cf. F. M. Braun, OP, Vol. 3/1, pp. 139-142].

1.] In Paul's Christological Hymn [cf. Ph 2:5-11], the Apostle exhorts the recipients of his Letter to have the same "mind" as is in Christ Jesus. In this same Letter, Paul tells the Philippians that the death of Christ was an heroic act of obedience [cf. Ph 2:8]. This same obedience unto death, the "Death on the Cross", is signified on two occasions in the Fourth Gospel by the fact that Jesus went to His death by order of the Father.

a.] The first text figures in the Good Shepherd Parable: He is speaking about laying down His life and taking it up again: "... and this is the command [*entole*] that I have received from my Father..." [cf. Jn 10:17, ff.].

b.] The second instance terminates the first section of the Farewell Discourse: "...I shall not talk with you any longer, because the prince of this world is on his way. He has no power over me, but the world must be brought to know that I love the Father and that I am doing exactly what the Father told me..." [cf. Jn 14:30, f.].

c.] In both cases, what is intended is the love of the Father for Jesus and then, the love of Jesus for the Father. This explains His decision: Come **Now**, let us go! [cf. Jn 14:31].

2.] This mysterious divine will comes up again at the moment of His arrest: "Put your sword back into its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me? [cf. Jn 18:11]. All of this confirms what went before: Christ cannot refuse to drink the cup that the Father has prepared for Him.

a.] This Cup of Suffering recalls to mind the Prayer of Gethsemane: "... And going on a little further, he fell on his face and prayed. My Father, he said, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by..." [cf. Mt 26:39, par.]. John has shifted this scene to his last chapter in "the Gospel of Signs: "... Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But, it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name! " [cf. Jn 12:27].

b.] The Symbol of the Cup recurs in Sacred Scripture applied to the terrible, a well-inspiring interventions of God in history [cf. Is 51:17-23; Jr 25:17-28; Mk 10:38, f.; Rv 14:10; 16:5, ff.]: Hi Cup of Anger. It is remarkable that John does not use this symbol in His Gospel.

c.] Whatever is the ultimate explanation for this fact, in Jesus' Discourse He takes strong exception to the impetuosity of His Apostle. The figurative term underlines the irrevocable will of accepting death contained in the Father's will for Redemption.

3.] If Jesus obeys out of love, even in the very sacrifice of His life, it is already self-evident that His submission to the Will of His Father is not limited to the carrying out of rigorous precepts alone. John's Gospel is characterized by short sayings, such as:

"... For I always do what pleases Him..." [cf. Jn 8:29].

"... If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love..." [cf. Jn 15:10].

a.] Jesus does not ever seek His own will [cf. Jn 5:30], nor His personal glory [cf. Jn 7:18]. His Will is in conformity to that of the Father [cf. Jn 5:30],

and He does not intend ever doing any other thing than the works of His Father [cf. Jn 5:19; 8:18; 10:37]. He only says what the Father says to Him [cf. Jn 12:49, ff.]. On His "own" He does not "do" [cf. Jn 5:19, 30; 8:28], nor "say" anything [cf. Jn 8:28] - all the deeds and words of Jesus are those of His Father.

b.] When the Apostles returned from the town of Sychar, Jesus had been speaking with the Samaritan woman [cf. Jn 4:8, ff.] , and they urged Him to have something to eat. Following the discourse on "thirst" to the Samaritan, Jesus then speaks of His own "nourishment":

"... My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his word..." [cf. Jn 4:32, ff.]

1.] With a slight inversion of Chapters 5 and 6, a certain order might develop:

- Chapter 5: is the second Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem [AUTUMN];
- Chapter 6: is the Passover, and the Bread of Life [SPRING-TIME].

2.] The two themes are intimately inter-connected:

- the Discourse on the sources of the **Living Water** by the well of Jacob with the Samaritan woman [cf. Jn 4:5-25];
- the Discourse on the **Bread of Life**, contrasted with the Manna of Moses, and the multiplication of the breads.

3.] The parallel is clearly noted in the lesson Jesus draws from both discourses:

"...Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water I shall give will never be thirsty again..." [cf. Jn 4:13, ff.].

"... He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst..." [cf. Jn 6:34].

4.] In the manner of Wisdom [cf. Pr 9:5; Si 24:20], Jesus offers to humanity the sole nourishment capable of satisfying their deep spiritual needs. Only the Word that has come down from heaven can give life to the world.

c.] In similar manner, the nourishment for which Jesus Himself experiences a deep hunger is on the level of heavenly realities which He seeks. For Jesus, it consists not so much in the Word, as He Himself is the Word. For

Jesus, this "hunger" is the perfect adherence to the Will of the Father, Who has sent Him so that the world might be saved..." [cf. Jn 3:17].

1.] Jesus "hungers" to carry out the Divine Will, point by point, as He explains:

"... As I who am sent by the living God, myself will draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me..." [cf. Jn 6:57]

"... He is the Father, just as the Father is in Him [cf. Jn 14:10], and the Father and He are one..." [cf. Jn 10:30].

Each time, Jesus accomplishes a "work", or says a "word"; He has the consciousness of doing this, or saying that - simply as the Father wills, and does all in union with Him. For Him, the will of the Father sustains His life - as nourishment does the life of a human being.

2.] In the same way that nourishment responds to the basic requirements of humanity, to do the Father's Will for Jesus responds to a vital need: this is His **Constitutional Filiation**. This need is of such a quality, and unique experience, in that it flows from the **AGAPE** which arouses it. This is the height of the analogy. What should be retained is that the submission of Jesus to the Will of the Father is of absolute necessity.

4.] Jesus assumed an individual and concrete human nature. This **Logos-Sophia** [Word-Wisdom], "nearest to the Father's heart" [cf. Jn 1:18], manifests these intrinsic notes:

- He is the Word by which the Father has done all [cf. Jn 1:3];
- He is equal to the Father [cf. Jn 5:18];
- He is indeed God [cf. Jn 1:1].

a.] Yet, He speaks of His Eternal Filiation in terms, such as: "For the Father is greater than I" [cf. Jn 14:28].

b.] Nonetheless, the revelation of His intimate union with the Father is revealed not merely through "formulae", or "statements carefully crafted", but also through deeds, by **His entire earthly existence**:

"... My food is to do the Will of the One Who sent me, and to complete his work..." [cf. Jn 4:34].

"... I can do nothing by myself... my aim is to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me..." [cf. Jn 5:30].

c.] Cardinal Newman has described this in an extraordinary insight [cf. "The Humiliation of the Son of God, in: *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. III. London 1883, p. 163]:

"... Though he was Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Obedience belongs to a servant, but accordance, concurrence, co-operation, are the characteristics of the Son. In His eternal union with God, there is no distinction of will and work between Him and His Father; as the Father's life was the Son's life, and the Father's glory was the Son's also - so, the Son was the very Word and wisdom of the Father, His Power and co-equal Minister in all things, the same and not the same, as He Himself.

"But, in the days of His flesh, when He had humbled Himself to the form of a servant, taking on Himself a separate will and a separate work, and the toil and sufferings incident to a creature, then what had been mere concurrence, became obedience. This, then, is the force of the Words: 'Though He was a Son, yet He had experience of obedience.' He took on Him a lower nature and wrought in it towards a will higher and more perfect than it. Further, He learned obedience through suffering."

d.] In the Christological controversies, there was within the Church a great struggle with "Adoptionism". Nonetheless, the obedience of Christ is the expression in attitudes and human decision of His eternal condition. His over-all intention in His human nature is dependence, elevated from that of "Servant", responding to the loving plan of the Father, and through fidelity to His commandments [cf. Jn 15:10]. By His own life, Jesus has fixed decisively the "Law" according to which His disciples will be called to surpass the level of "Servant":

"... If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love..." [cf. Jn 15"10].

"...You are my friends if you do what I command you..." [cf. v. 15].

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4. The Scope of His Mission: LIFE [cf. F. M. Braun, OP, Vol. 3/1, pp. 71-75].

a. The scope of His Mission as assigned by the Father, is that of Life:

"... Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost, but may have life eternal..." [cf. Jn 3:16].

This idea appears 17 times in the Gospel, and 6 additional times in the Epistles. The concept first made its appearance in Daniel:

'... Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth, many will awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting disgrace...' [cf. Dn 12:2].

b. In John's idea, in the place of being rejected at the end of time, there is this promise of Life which is already present, begun. From the coming of Christ onward, all have been called to share in it. Between the presence of Jesus here and now, and eternal life with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there is some kind of identity, even though "eternal life" here does not manifest all of its effects:

"... My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is that when it is revealed, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is... [cf. 1 Jn 3:2].

c. Nonetheless, essentially those who believe in Him are already in possession of this life; Jesus never tires of preaching this to His listeners [cf. Jn 3:35, ff.; 5:24; 6:40, 47, 54; 10:28; 17:2; 1 Jn 1:2; 2:25; 3:14; 5:11-13]:

"... I have written all of this so that you who believe in the name of the Son of God may be sure that you have eternal life..." [cf. 1 Jn 5:13. 18-20; cf. Jn 20:31].

d. What this "life" requires here and now is a New Birth from on high, from God [cf. Jn 1:13; 1 Jn 2:20; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18]. In the grace of this New Birth, elevated above the earthly and sinful condition [cf. 1 Jn 3:9], the "regenerated believer can have access to the Kingdom on high" [cf. Jn 3:3]. It is here that the Lord shares the power to become the children of God [cf. Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 3:1, 2, 10]. This **Filiation** and only this - will ensure eternal life. Jesus has come to share His Divine Filiation, to communicate His Filial Attitude.



5. **The Father's Glory** [cf. F.M. Braun, OP, Vol. 3.1, pp. 146-152]:

a. The "Hour" of anyone indicters his/her great moment, when the work for which one has been destined is accomplished. The "hour" of the Mother-to-be is when the child comes to the light of day [cf. Jn 16:21].

1.] The biblical "Hour", however, is present as something ominous:

"... I have told you this so that your faith may not be shaken. They will indeed expel you from the synagogues, and indeed the hour is coming when anyone who kills you will think that he is doing a holy duty for God..." [cf. Jn 16: 1, ff.]

".... But I have told you this so that when the time comes for it, you may remember that I told you..." [cf. v. 4].

2.] Jesus' "Hour" is that moment when there is definitively realized the "work" for which He had been sent into this world: i.e., the Victory over Satan, sin and death [cf. Jn 12:23, f.; 27, 31, f.].

a.] There is no doubt that for the 4th Gospel, this "Hour" represents something of the first order. The importance that is given to it, the fact that it is assigned to the very end of the earthly life of Jesus, are emphatically brought out by these words:

"... Now that the hour has come for the son of Man to be glorified... a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies.. and yields a rich harvest.... Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But, it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!..." [cf. Jn 1:23, 27].

b.] Before the Feast of Passover, Jesus knew that the Hour had come for Him to "Pass Over" from this world to the Father, and Jesus who had loved His own, would love them through to the very end. [cf. Jn 13:1].

c.] And again, at the very beginning of the Priestly Prayer:

"... Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you, and through the power over all mankind that you have given to him, let him give eternal life to all those who have been entrusted to him..." [cf. Jn 17:1, ff.].

b. At times, this "Hour" was projected at some relatively distant point in the future [cf. Jn 2:4; 7:30; 8:20] - but, the Inevitable Hour for which Jesus came, was constantly present to Him. Until His "hour" came, His enemies will not have power over Him. When they try to apprehend Him, they can not [cf. Jn 7:30; 8:20]; yet, each time the increasing opposition between Jesus and His adversaries comes to light, the final "Hour" seems more and more ominous [cf. Jn 5:18; 7:1, 19-25; 8:37-40; 11:53].

c. The "Hour" of Jesus becomes one and the same as His Elevation on the Cross:

"... I tell you most solemnly, the Hour will come - in fact, it is here already - when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God, and all who hear it will live..." [cf. Jn 5:25].

"... Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice..." [cf. Jn 5:28].

It will be an "Hour of Decision", those who did good, will rise again to life; and those who did evil, to condemnation ... It is an "Hour" when the true worshippers of the Father will appear [cf. Jn 4:23].

d. The "Hour" is also noted at Cana: "... Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet..." [cf. Jn 2:3]. The account of the "Woman" of Cana is a challenging passage and violence is done to the passage when it is "sweetened". The Hour of Cana is the introduction of the "Great Moment", from which the thought of Christ I hardly ever distracted.

1.] The changing of the Water into Wine which had been contained in the stone jars, was meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews. The water became an excellent wine, "reserved for the end", contrary to practical customs of brining out the "poorer" wine for the end of the nuptial banquet. This whole ceremony indicates the New Covenant announced by the prophet. "Woman, what does this mean to me and to you?" - also indicates the transcendence of the Son, entirely submitted to the Divine Will, far beyond any ties of flesh and blood. The changing announces the great transformation which will be produced at that instant when Mary, present at the foot of the Cross, will receive as son, the Beloved Disciple, re-presenting the faithful. [cf. Jn 19:25-27].

2.] There is here what is called by scholars a biblical inclusion, i.e., a very similar parallel as between two texts:

"... Jesus said: 'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me...'" [cf. Jn 4:34]

"... I have glorified you on earth and finished the work that you gave me to do..." [cf. Jn 17:4]

From beginning to end, Jesus is presented as totally committed to the "work" which devours Him. Thus, from Cana on, he begins the 12 hours of the day when one can walk without stumbling - this will no longer be possible in the hour of darkness. At the end of this, He will "Give up His Spirit" [cf. Jn 19:30]. Until this Day will reach its conclusion and fulfillment, He will not cease to work [cf. Jn 5:17] - throughout the long "Day" He will pursue His task.

e. By contrast with the Last Hour, the "particular moments" assigned by the Father to each one of His "Works", are the opportune time [the *kairoî*] which flow throughout His life with an established plan. When His disciples sincerely suggest: "since you are doing all this, you should let the whole world see..." [cf. Jn 7:4], Jesus

declines their invitation for the sole reason: "The right time for me has not yet come..." In this sense, they have more "freedom" than He does - they may go up for the Feast, but He will not:

"... Go on to the Festival yourselves: I am not going to this festival, because for me the time is not ripe yet..." [cf. Jn 7:8].

f. In all truth, the moment of His great manifestation will take place when His "Hour" does come. As long as the intermediating time passes, He must be busy about His Father's Work, in the conditions determined by Him. It was "necessary" for the suffering man of Siloe to have been born in affliction, so that through this occasion, the works of God might be manifest:

"...As long as the day lasts, I must carry out the work of the one who has sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work..." [cf. Jn 9:4].

1.] It was necessary for Jesus to be far away while Lazarus, His friend, suffered his illness. This was all to glorify the Son of God [cf. Jn 11:4].

2.] It simply "had to be" that He should return from Jerusalem into Galilee and that He would make a stop at Jacob's Well, precisely at the 6th Hour [cf. Jn 4:4-6].

3.] Nothing in His life was left to mere chance, however. On the pathway that had been traced out for Him, Jesus was not to hasten the stages, to anticipate the "hour" - it had all been foreseen. When it does come, it will come unexpectedly and this is an invitation for all to profit by His presence. There is always the great risk to seek, and not find Him [cf. Jn 7:33, 36; 8:21]:

"... The light will be with you only a little longer now. Walk while you have the light, or the dark will overtake you; he who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Walk while you still have the light, believe in the light and you will become sons of light..." [cf. Jn 12:35, ff.].

g. As for Himself, when the "Hour" finally does come, His soul is "troubled" [cf. Jn 12:27] - this is explained not so much for fear of the terrible ordeal, this total out-pouring of the unleashed powers of evil. This is an Agony like that of Gethsemane [cf. Mt 26:37, par.; Mk 14:35]. This prayer offers the slim hope that this "Cup" might indeed pass from Him, that indeed, He might be spared this "Hour". The piteous request: "Save me from this Hour" cannot be said that He is asking for a release from the Father's Will - it is for this very "Hour" that He has come. Nonetheless, He frequently is presented with troubled soul:

- before the tomb of Lazarus: "Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart..." [cf. Jn 11:33];

- at the betrayal of Judas: "... Having said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared ... one of you will betray me..." [cf. Jn 13:21]

h. So, Jesus has come a long way to reach this 'Hour' and He accepts His will so that the "Name of the Father might be glorified": "... Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me...?" [cf. Jn 18:11]. It is all part of the "Plan", through which the son of Man will be glorified: "... Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified..." [cf. Jn 12:23].

i. From one end of His earthly life to the other, Jesus' entire earthly existence was dominated by this "Hour":

- the "Hour" had not yet come;
- it was "approaching";
- is "here".

The "Hour" toward which Jesus' entire existence is oriented, is an inexorable "march", a program to be carried out, a "Plan" to be fulfilled; it is purpose that is expected; a moment that will arrive - and all of this is in the utmost solidarity with that which the Father has given Him to accomplish [cf. Jn 6:34; 17:4]. Divine Wisdom will make use of human instrumentality, so that the "Hour" of Jesus must be subject to history and to geography, all as part of the "marvelous condescension" of the Incarnation. The "Hour" is that for which Jesus has come into this world.

j. The "Hour" of Jesus is the grand moment of Salvation History, which separates all of time into two segments:

- the first, began with creation and ends on Good Friday;
- the second, picks up on that day, and continues to unfold, in full dependence on eschatological fullness. It has already been realized in Jesus, who sets a model for the life of the Church. This will go on until the end of all time. To live this second period, there is need to return repeatedly in faith to the word and to the sacraments, in order to have eternal life and to be saved.

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6. It is accomplished! [cf. Jn 19:30]

a. To indicate this accomplishment, Scripture usually uses the word *pleroma*, *plereo*: to fulfill: "in order that the Scriptures be fulfilled." In connection with His Passion, there is the expression: *telciothe*: "...After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfill the scripture perfectly he said: 'I

am thirsty!' ..." [cf. Jn 19:28]. Whatever word is used, the whole drama of Jesus is to complete, fulfill the Scriptures [cf. Jn 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24,35].

b. There seems definitely to be a Plan behind all this insistence on the part of John: "...He had always loved those who were his in the world and now he showed how perfect his love was..."[cf. Jn 13:1]. This "perfection", "fulfillment", implies the entire earthly existence of Jesus. This is all part of the "works" that He accomplishes for His Father: "... My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete His work..." [cf. Jn 4:34].

c. John shows in detail that in the Passion, the "Scriptures" - and notable Ps 22 [The Sufferings and the Hope of the Virtuous Man] find their fulfillment, completion in Jesus. There has been a systematic Obedience to a Plan.

1.] This is noted three times in a relatively short space:

- they shared out my clothing... in this way the words of Scripture were fulfilled [cf. Jn 19:24];

- all this happened to fulfill the words of Scripture: not a bone of his will be broken [cf. Jn 19:36];

- and in another place, Scripture says: They will look on the one they have pierced [cf. Jn 19:37].

2.] The suffering and death of Jesus are presented as part of the Divine Plan [cf. Jn 19:11] - and this is present in the scene describing His "thirst": "to fulfill the Scriptures" [cf. Jn 19:28-30].

3.] Jesus has the conviction of being the ultimate Prophet, and so expresses His will to give His life [cf. Jn 10:11, 15, 17, ff.], for the salvation of the world [cf. Jn 6:51], and the unity of believers [cf. Jn 10:16; 11:52; 17:19-21].

d. Therefore, the fulfillment of the Scriptures [cf. Jn 19:28] - and: it is accomplished [cf. Jn 19:30] - express the same reality. Between the profound conviction that Jesus has of having accomplished the program assigned to His earthly existence, and the proclamation that He indeed had carried it all out, is a direct transition. Subordinate to the accomplishment of His Mission, the fulfillment of the prophecies in His drama is secondary.

e. Even though it is "secondary", the Evangelist goes to great pains to present the individual fulfillment of the Scriptures. John's idea is that all that Moses and the Prophets have written [cf. Jn 1:45; 2:22; 5:46; 12:16] simply have concerned Jesus Christ. In the over-all understanding of the individual texts, Scripture indeed contains the Word of God. All the particular application to the Person of Jesus tend to

demonstrate that the unfolding of His earthly life depended entirely on the Father's will. The accomplishment of Scripture was the accomplishment of the Father's "work", being carried out to the full, just as Yahweh had ordered. The Scriptures contain the salvific will of God.

f. In the Synoptics, Jesus utters an agonizing cry:

"... At the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice..." [cf. Mk 15:37].

"... But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit..." [cf. Mt 17:50].

"... Jesus cried out in a loud voice: 'Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit...' [cf. Lk 23:46].

In John, it is more simple:

"... Jesus said: 'It is accomplished...'" [cf. Jn 19:30].

1.] There is a slight contrast also with what Stephen would do: he asks the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit [cf. Ac 7:59].

2.] Jesus, however, addresses Himself to His heavenly Father, as He does in the Priestly Prayer [cf. Jn 17:4]. He realized the Scriptures - so, there was no more for Him to do, than to give way to the Spirit: He "ex-spined", laid down His life, only to take it up again. [cf. Jn 10:18].

g. With deep intuition, St. Augustine interprets this dramatic scene: the inclination of Jesus' head, prior to the last breath, is an indication more of a man in control of His destiny, offering this obeisance to the Father - rather than one despairing in agony.

h. The manner of description of this scene is a carefully worked out passage. In "giving up His Spirit", there is a unique expression: the intention here seems to be that as a crowning of His earthly existence, by His voluntary death, Jesus gives to the world the Gift of His Spirit, promised for the final times.



7. Jesus' Total Existence as Obedient Response [cf. G. Marchesi, *La cristologia di Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice 1977, pp. 246-274, passim].

a. The abundant biblical data offers much material for deeper contemplation. A series of characteristics of Jesus' earthly sojourn emerge: obedience, availability, transparency, poverty - and also Jesus' authority - all of these are as rays which enable one to seek to penetrate the center of this great Mystery.

1.] When one tries to respond to the challenging question placed before all believers: "Who are you, Jesus?" [cf. Jn 8:25] - a believer is led to drink from the streams of the Living Water, the source of eternal life [cf. Jn 4:10, 14; 1 Jn 5:6; Ps 36:10; Is 58:11]. The effort is to seek to penetrate to the heart of revelation to grasp the full implications of Jesus' relationship to the Father, as this is expressed in human terms.

2.] His "obedience", His "availability" are by no means abstract. They constitute rather privileged means for fathoming more profoundly into the inner Mystery of Jesus, the Icon of the Father. They are channels opening profoundly into the depths of the Mystery of His Person, shared with the Father and the Holy Spirit. They can lead the prayerful reader to a deeper share in the Mystery of the Living God.

b. The humanity of Jesus is the expression, the sacrament" of His Divinity: the entire "openness" of Jesus to His Father leads the believer to ponder the very nature of God. "Obedience" is a term used to represent His existential constitution.

To have seen Me, is to have seen the Father [cf. Jn 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:1, ff.].

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8. Jesus' Filial Obedience and His Constitutional Filiation

a. The Word of God has become man and experiences "obedience". This offers to the Church the greatest proof of His infinite **Filial Love**. With the historical obedience of Jesus to the Father are faithfully connected themes, such as: the Spousal Availability of Mary, the new Daughter of Zion - the Fidelity of St. Joseph [cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Redemptoris Custos*, August 15, 1989]; the faithful availability of the Church - the Spouse of Christ; and the following/imitation of Christ, as the realization of the Christian vocation. By means of obedience, and its allied concepts, there is offered a fundamental element that sheds light on the Person of Jesus. The many various happenings of the earthly existence of Jesus have a point of meeting in His loving obedience toward His heavenly Father. This insight can shed some light on the multiple beauty of the Divine Personality, as lived by Jesus.

b. There is a difficulty in thinking of the Person of Jesus s being revealed by obedience: there is the risk that such a presentation, when carried to the extreme, would remove from Jesus His optional capacity, His freedom, and hence - the merit of His earthly acts. There is a false mysticism in presenting the Person of Jesus as mere passivity. In the totality of Christ, this obedience of His is an eminent expression of His love for the Father, which remains a free act of His will. There is a radical unity in Jesus for the Will of the Father, as well as for His Person. In the "absolute intensity" of His obedience, the Father's Will is His ": food" - there is no contrast between what the Son wills and what the Father wills. For Jesus, the execution of the father's Will is one and the same as Jesus' love for the Father.

c. The obedience of Jesus manifests His radical "openness: to receive all from His Father. Obedience thus becomes that grand act of love with which Jesus expresses His intimate essence as Son: His obedience is a lived attitude, an existential disposition. It expresses His divine fullness in difficult human terms, and, at the same time, gives to obedience a new fullness. In the strength of the hypostatic union, there is an identity between the One Who obeys, and His obedience. Jesus is structurally constituted by His loving obedience, and is existentially obedient lovingly.

d. Jesus is not only the Original Word of God, but He is also the Word from which all others originate. His Word embraces and realizes all other expressions of creation. He is, therefore, the Word and Response in a unique act of love. he is the Word that frees all human beings. Jesus is not only the "sovereign", and "transcendent" Word of God - but, He is also "correspondence". He is the perfect "restitution", the full response to all that has been received from the father. Jesus is the "Open One", the One who is "Receptive" to the Father, the One Who perfectly fulfills the Father's Will.

e. James' words in his letter have already been perfectly fulfilled in Jesus:"... You must do what the word tells you..." [cf. Jas 1:22]. In the strength of His availability to the word and to the will of the Father, Jesus is the model and the supreme realization of the operative listening and obedient carrying out. His obedience becomes intimately and directly associated with openness to the Father, which is His ontological constitution - this is His existential disposition. His ":openness" is a way of thinking of the mystery of the Man-God: this is the "Mind" of Christ Jesus, which all of His followers need to "put on" [cf. Ph 2:5, ff.]. He is oriented above and beyond Himself, in this is the mystery of Jesus Christ.

f. The connection between obedience and openness of Christ is further confirmed by the same terminology concerning **Mission**. This, too, is founded in His receptive openness toward the Father. Loving obedience establishes the existence of Jesus, and this is revealed through His human nature, as an expression of His inner

nature and being. His incomparable obedience is **His fundamental act**, the form of His very being. It is on His unique obedience that there is based His authority, His fullness of power. As the **Mission from "on high"** is the proof of the divinity of Jesus [cf. Jn 4:33-34; 5:30; 6:38-40], so obedience is the very verification, the explicitation of the divine Mission itself, and realizes It fully. In Christ, therefore, Mission and Obedience are in perfect harmony. Jesus is identified with Mandate, with obedient, in so far as His loving obedience is the full response of the Father's sending of Him.

g. There is in this consideration of Jesus [which is one of the many ways theology employs seeking to come to grips on a deeper level with His personality], a certain esthetic vision. There is in Jesus a unique receptivity and sensibility for the fascination of the Beautiful - which is both revealed and hidden at one and the same time in Him. Therefore, the Encounter, with the Mystery of the Beautiful is not accomplished once and for all - nor can the meeting with Christ ever be a mere intellectual, rational knowledge before the harmonious Person. Jesus Christ is "Beautiful by Essence" - in this there is a profound Paradox, Enigma, Secret. In Jesus, there is extraordinary "proportionality", harmony - between the divine and the human. The key to the understanding of Jesus is His Yes to the Father, His fiat. In Jesus, there is no contradiction, but merely loving obedience.

h. Fundamentally, Jesus obeys the Father - Who is the stable Point of the Redemptive Mission and the mirror of the contemplation and the action of the Trinity. Precisely in so far as the obedience of Jesus is absolute, "even to the death on the Cross" [cf. Ph 2:8], it is total abandonment, the extreme weakness to the Power of the Father. In His Filial Consciousness Jesus realizes that "before Abraham, He already "was" [cf. Jn 8:59] - and that He was already David's "Lord" [cf. Mt 22:45] - Jesus obeys the Father, by accepting and carrying out His entire salvific plan [cf. Rm 15:8]. Making His very own the "destiny" of the prophets- martyrs, Jesus does not remain on their level [cf. Mt 12:41, ff.], nor is He restricted to the dimensions of their Mission. The obedience of Jesus is His radical response to the Spirit given to Him from on high, even to the point of identifying His life and His death with the very Word of God and its "demands".

i. The loving, obediential relationship of Jesus to the father "hides" His transcendence in one sense - but, at the same time, reveals it. In carrying to fulfillment the Law and the Prophets, He carries to completion the "terrestrial work" of the Father. Jesus remains personally "open" to the Father, as do the many Christological affirmations manifest [cf. Jn 2:25; 5:33, ff.; 8:18; Mt 11:7-11]. The testimony of the Father is the guarantee of the revelation and the work achieved by the Son on earth. The filial carrying out of this will is His "food" [cf. Jn 4:32-34; 6:38-40], which "sustains" Jesus in His whole living, dying and resurrecting.

j. As the Father is the One Whom Jesus obeys, the question of "how" Jesus obeys comes to the fore. His obedience paradoxically also expresses His full freedom. There can be no "fatalistic" vision of Jesus the Son of God - even though it was "necessary" that it all came to happen [cf. Lk 24:26; Mt 16:21; Mk 8:31]. In His "oneness toward humanity", there is the tie with the divinity. The ultimate expression of this unifying openness and obedience is, of course, love; Jesus came on earth to bring the father's *agape*, the very bond of the life of the Most Blessed Trinity.

k. The "historical" life of Jesus, even though already sketched and traced out for Him in anticipation by the prefigures of the Old Law, in no way was "determined" before-hand. In so far as Jesus is the fullness and the foundation of the promise, He constitutes the Archetype of Scripture - inspired from beginning to end in a Christological form. Jesus perceives His own biography in sacred history, which unfolds in the light of His eternal openness toward His Father. The Will of the Father constitutes the content and the form of the Son's existence. This is an eternal content, given continually and communicated concretely in the life and time of the earthy Christ.

l. Jesus does not obey "by instinct", but out of the fullness of His loving free will for the Father, for humanity - and it is this love that "teaches" Him "obedience" [cf. Heb 5:8]. It is not the obedience of a slave/servant, Who carries out to the letter the dispositions of an employer. the faithful and docile response of Christ is much more free - His obedience is essentially His love. It flows from the unity of dialogue between the father and the son, from the vision [cf. Jn 5:19; 6:46; 8:38], from the listening [cf. Jn 8:26,40], from the knowledge p[cf. Jn 7:29; 8:55] - which Jesus has in a unique and proper manner in relation to His Father. this obedience of the Divine Son is in Itself, eternal love. This obedience of love, or loving obedience of the Son for the Father coincides with the love of the Father for Him. The One sending and the One receiving the mandate act from the same freedom of divine love. The Son "leaves" the Father free, while remaining united to Him in His obedience.

m. Form the loving obedience of Jesus, other aspects develop, such as: Trinitarian diffusion and revelation. This is thought of as "Irradiation", going out from a central source, and a concentration, directing all to that Fontal Love. the new fecundity which is inexhaustible - of the obedience of Jesus, is based precisely on His personal response, on His total commitment, that is absolutely unconditioned, for the Cause of the Father. No one else ever fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, and brought such honor to the Father. No one ever before grasped the ultimate intention and the deepest secrets of the spirit in the reading of the Divine Word. The love with which Jesus obeyed is the creative element which signs the leap from the "old" to the "new" [cf. 2 Co 5:17]. The love of Jesus is so perfect that it removes the principle of servile obedience, and places the whole Law at the service of love. This obedience of love is

the "service" which the Son renders freely to the Father. Jesus is not merely a passage from the Old Law to the New - but, rather that of a qualitative abyss between the old and the new. He indeed is the new Creation, the new Covenant, the New Commandment - in the best possible manner.



9. Trinitarian "Obedience" in Divine Revelation

a. The obedience of Jesus Christ is profoundly "Trinitarian", and this under two points of view:

- first, in the unitive sense: the intimate union of Jesus to the Father in communion and docility to His Spirit;

- secondly, in a diffusive sense: in that obedience out of love is the visible expression to the world of the hidden mystery of God.

1.] The historical obedience of the Son gives the highest emphasis to the Trinitarian life; through His obedience, the "positions" of the divine Persons in their most intimate unity, become distinguishable in a precise manner. The obedience of Jesus is "Trinitarian", in that in so far as He is God, He is already "obedient" eternally to the Father, being sent by him, in His openness and docility. He is obedient to the Father guided and loved by the Spirit. This communion accompanies and vivifies the entire existence of Christ [cf. Jn 1:32; 3:34; 6:63; 7:39]. The death, the supreme manifestation of His obedience, is sealed by the "e-mission", the "ex-**spiration**" of the Holy Spirit [cf. Jn 20:30]. His death is the sign of a Mission completed [cf. Jn 19:34]: this is the return of Jesus to His Father.

2.] His "going to the Father", including the Cross and Glorification, is to be read in the sign of obedience: this implies the total remission of humanity to God. This act of Jesus is the fulfillment of the New and Ever-lasting Covenant.

3.] In this Trinitarian "obedience" of Jesus, there is clearly a two-fold dimension:

- vertical: in this dimension, the Father's will is accepted; in His uninterrupted Mission is all that constitutes him "Son", both in time as well as in eternity. Jesus accomplishes the Father's works with fidelity and docility.

- horizontal: this consists in bringing to completion also the promises of Prophecy, within human history.

b. The privileged "place" for the manifestation of God is the concrete existence of Jesus Christ, His humanity, as the visible expression of God. In His humanity, the historical obedience of Jesus plays a determining role and one that sheds much light on the inner mystery of God, as well as offering a model for the life of the Christian. There is a most intimate tie between the very clearly intra-Trinitarian, eternal expression of Christological obedience - and the revelation that His human life afforded in words and deeds. Christ personifies the glory of God - precisely through His obedience, He becomes the auto-manifestation of divine Glory.

1.] His historical obedience corresponds to His unique Divine Nature. His Mission from on High corresponds to His docile and faithful response as a man. In Jesus, there is no mere neutral image of God, but there is necessarily manifest the divine event of the eternal procession. In Jesus, the Triune God appears.

2.] In so far as He is God, He can command and obey at the same time. The Mystery of the Incarnation, particularly in its culminating moments, is an outstanding revelation of the Trinity.

c. It is precisely through His obedience [cf. Jn 14:31] that the love of Jesus for the Father becomes "visible". Through the glorification of the Son, resulting from His obedience even unto death, there is manifest the Father's love for the Son. Christ is the presence of divine love on earth - that presence in which eternal love is visible, is expressed, and is realized. Throughout His entire life, from His birth, through His infancy - His public life [cf. Ac 10:38], to the extreme humiliation of the washing of the feet [cf. Jn 13:1, ff.] - to the institution of the Eucharist, through His Passion, Death and Resurrection - Jesus manifests throughout, His most intimate essence; this is not mere "arable", or metaphor. The great affirmations of Jesus:

- I AM the Light of the World [cf. Jn 8:12];

- I AM the resurrection [cf. Jn 11:25];

- I AM the Bread of Life [cf. Jn 6:35, 48, 51] - these are all seen as having their ultimate source in the Heavenly Father, and that Jesus merely manifests Him as a most unique revelation of the Father, Who is behind all of them.

d. Gradually, the profound, unfathomable unity in Christology: the unique union of God with humanity, is presented with ever greater sublimity to the reflecting Church. There is a most intimate identity between: Mission, Openness, Obedience, **Love**.

1.] In a most particular manner, Mission, Obedience and Love are the human expressions that shed the most light around which the mystery of the

Incarnation, Redemption, Trinity, evolve. The "marvelous condescension" of Jesus, as well as His "Glorious Exaltation" from the father are brought together in these terms.

2.] The love which guides Jesus Christ, and constitutes Him in His Eucharistic Presence and in His return to His Father, is the vital source of His entire contemplation and action, of His work of revelation and sanctification. This is the filial love of Christ for the Father, His sacrificial love for the world, merely two expressions of one and the same reality. This is His knowing response to His mission from on high.

e. With reflections on the obediential love of Jesus, one could well conclude the development of "Ascending Christology". However, there is an aspect of His earthly existence in which His obedience and love stand out in a most extraordinary manner - so much so, that this has remained as the genuine sign of the entire Mystery of Jesus: **the Cross!**



10. The Sacred Stigmata: the "Form" of the Figure of Christ - the Icon of Trinitarian Love

a. In this consideration of the Mystery of Christ, loving obedience is the fundamental act of the life of Jesus. It is commonly believed that the ultimate scope of the earthly dimension of the Incarnation is the Cross, the Stigmata. The existence of Christ is a path toward the Cross. hence, His loving obedience is not some passing act - not a choice of circumstances. The Cross is the supreme act of His Self-giving of love. It is anticipated intentionally and lived existentially in every instant of His earthy history. Loving obedience is presented by Scripture as a kind of specification of His very being and of His Mission of Love. Loving Obedience is the **form** of life of God made man.

b. By "**Form**" in this context is meant the active element which imprints a determined configuration on His earthly existence - which is the revelation of His divinity. The "**Form**" is what delineates, and unifies the wide variety of elements known in His life. The "**Figure**" might be thought of as the visible result, that is delineated and signed by the impressed form.

c. The "**Figure**" of Christ has been presented to us by divine revelation on various levels. These are all characterized in harmony and proportion, in a perfect accord between the divine and the human. Thus, the "Figure" of Jesus presented to us in Revelation is the supreme expression of the beauty and the love of God, and the most high response to God.

1.] In this consideration of Jesus Christ, loving obedience is the active element, the aspect that revelation presents to us as configuring and unifying the image that Jesus presents concerning Himself and His Father. Jesus is "signed" by obedience. It is this loving obedience which "configures" His entire existence, gives color to His every act, offers a tonality to the revelation which He makes of Himself and of the Father.

2.] His death on the Cross is but the ultimate and definitive sign [cf. Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32] - one that is not in any way "spectacular", but in every way, is imposing - of His existence IN and THROUGH obedience.

3/] In the complex manifestation of the life of Christ, loving obedience presents the Figure of Christ under a particularly revealing light - He, nonetheless, remains a great mystery. The more direct and profound the revelation of His nature, His relationship with the Father becomes - then all the more difficult it is to include under any single human expression, such as "loving obedience"! This has to imply the most extraordinary tendency toward the Father and humanity at the same time.

4.] As the mystery is infinite, there is always possible a constant misunderstanding of His own Words, that may be heard and read, but not fully grasped. This shows anew the basic necessity of "faith" which Christ demands and arouses: it is the light of faith that penetrates far beyond all the "systems" of reflection.

d. The **Image** of God is presented to us by Jesus Christ and in Him [cf. Jn 14:9-11]. This **Icon** is a Paradox, characterized by two essential elements:

- it embraces the dynamism which renders Him "empowered" to speak and to act with the very power of God;

- and yet, at the same time, He suffers and dies in abject misery.

This **Image** is not a contradiction, but a harmonious unity - and what unites the human and the divine in Jesus is His Yes to the Father, His receptivity of Mission, His openness to the Father's Will. Jesus is the One Who speaks with divine power and suffers with human weakness, and does this in the strength of His Loving Obedience.

e. The Words of Jesus in His own time, and also in our own - can bring a certain "discomfort". His message is presented with a disturbing power that does not allow of discussion: He presents His word as the only and definitive word. He constantly demands a response of faith and conversion. In doing this, He clearly

speaks with a divine capability. Jesus speaks with "divine right", about which He manifests no doubt. While on the one hand, we find Jesus surrendering the divine glory, which is His "right" - yet, He never minces His message, and speaks with a divine "right" the words of the Father [cf. Jn 6:60; 8:52-59; 10:33]. He speaks with a divine prerogative, authority. Jesus often invokes this divine "right": He knows that He is the Word of the Father, His Revealer. It is Jesus Who makes the word of the Creator resound throughout the world. Jesus presents Himself in the inimitable realization that He has the absolute prerogative of being the define salvation of God for humanity. Jesus is the synthesis of previous History, Law and Prophecy - and now is the **Way**, the **Truth** and the **Life**. He has absolute transcendence, authority, superiority, over the Law of Moses, the Sabbath.

1.] It is the Synoptics most of all who amply present Christ under this aspect of His Power:

- in commanding the unclean spirits;
- in exorcising the demons;
- in His opposition to the "powers" which do not operate in God.

Throughout, Jesus speaks with "authority", performs miracles as the Creator: heals, pardons. The moment of "truth" of the encounter of Jesus with the powers of evil are: His temptations, Gethsemane, the Cross. in all of these, paradoxically, Jesus "conquers".

2.] Throughout His public life, His "new authority" was evident [cf. Mk 1:27; 4:41]; surprise and wonder are manifest concerning Him [cf. Mt 7:28, f. ; Mk 1:22; Lk 4:32; 7:1]. He indeed has the fullness of power [cf. Mt 11:22; 28:18], and His message is that He is the Word of God, the Word of God present to the world, the revelation of the Father and the Triune God.

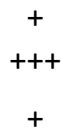
f. His Power is that of Subjection: whether He presents Himself as Word, Way, Truth, Life, Light, Bread: it is always from God that He takes His inspiration, power. The Mystery of the Incarnation is based on Trinitarian "obedience". it is the mystery of the Incarnation which illumines all the dynamism of the obedient life of Christ, which gives the right coloration to the power of His works and words. From the Gift that the Father makes to humanity in the Incarnation of His Son, there is the idea of the offering, the oblation, the consent to His Father. Form the part of Christ, it is the act of loving obedience, out of His sublime love for His Father and for humanity, in full freedom, and total lack of self-interest, that constitutes the ontological foundation of His life. For the Father's salvific Mission, the Son has responded with total commitment of Himself. The power that Jesus "has" is a power "received" in His

eternal Mission from the father - the "Word" that Jesus is, is the expression of the Father. It is in His loving self-giving that Jesus expresses full power, and offers the ultimate word.



Summary

- [1] Jesus' entire life, earthly sojourn, is "configured" by obedience, out of love.
 [2] From this, there is formulated a **Christological analogy** between the life of Jesus and that of every Christian.



C. FATHER BERTONI'S THOUGHT

1. Total Commitment to Jesus Christ: for Fr. Bertoni, his creativity was his placing himself at the disposal of the One Who was simply beyond him - One indeed capable of "drawing" all to Himself. The Person of Jesus Christ, as was noted above, was the core of his charism, his yearning and his service of the Church. We often find passages, such as: "... Frequent memory of the life of Christ, with a tender love of correspondence..." [cf. MP, Feb. 1, 1809].

a. The entire life of Jesus is a Lesson - Jesus is **the Master in this School of God:**

Jesus teaches us how His principal occupation and His entire effort was that of attending to all that would be of service to His heavenly father, without being diverted to anything else..."

[cf. Spiritual Exercises to the Seminarians and Priests - cf. CS I, p. 179].

b. The great Model for the **Apostolic Missionary for the Assistance of Bishops** is Jesus' own relationship to His Father and toward humanity:

"... We serve the One Who is by so many titles our Master, and One Who has more than purchased our service. The reason is that He Himself before we did, served with such fatigue, with so many humiliations, so much suffering. Furthermore, it is He who promises to reward our service by having us sit with Him on the same throne in His glory..." [cf. Sermon 36, external Worship, October 3, 1805, in PVC p. 215].

"... For you also are the Lessons of Christ, your Teacher, necessary: 'Learn of me', He says, 'For I am meek and humble of heart.' [cf. Mt 11:29]. 'Learn of Me' in that I am equal to the Father, but I emptied Myself, taking on the nature of a new-born baby, Whose first crib was stable hay. Then for 30 years I was subject to those whom I had created, to make Myself obedient to the Father, even unto the death on the cross [cf. Ph 2:6-8]. [This was Fr. Bertoni's first public sermon, delivered as a Deacon, more than three months prior to his priestly ordination - in: PVC 146].

c. Stigmatine "availability" is meant to be an active choice, often repeated - and not merely passive acceptance. It is meant to be a dynamic state of mind in that, by it, one strives to remain always open to the call of God in this concrete "now" of time. Availability, furthermore, is open to boundless hope in Him Who guides us along the pathway to an ever new encounter with Him, and then ultimately, toward the totally "new" and definitive encounter:

"... to You, my Jesus, my God, I surrender, I commit myself, I abandon myself..." [cf. Sermon 23, April 2, 1804 - in PVC, p. 37].

"... What does 'Jesus' mean if not 'savior'? That is, He Who is a God, Who, to manifest to humanity that excessive love with which He loves each person and from all eternity. The reason why He descended from Heaven was so that each person might right up there. He too on our flesh to make us the 'consorts' [sharers] in His own nature. Finally, He died to give us life, and life eternal. Is not this a love that is so generous that it should be able ... to penetrate even the hardest of hearts...? " [cf. Sermon 9, "The Name of Jesus", 11nd Sunday after Epiphany, 1801 - in: PVC 243].

d. The over-all motivation for St. Gaspar Bertoni's Apostolic Mission is always the Witness of Jesus Himself:

"... My brothers and sisters! Let us think better of God, now that we have seen that He did not even spare His only-begotten Son because of love for us. But rather, He handed Him over to the most crude torments, and to a shameful death to redeem us from our iniquities..." [cf. Sermon 27 - Jan. 27, 1805 - in: PVC p. 40].

2. The Father's Infinite Love and Mercy: the Inexhaustible Source of the Apostolic Mission: the infinite Power behind this Witness, and the ultimate inspiration of the Apostolic Mission is the Father's eternal love:

"... That love which h the father has had for you has never been sterile, nor inefficacious. Rather, this love became most effective in the proper moment of time, by sending you a Redeemer ... Therefore, just think over this benefit of Redemption. Just consider how God has sent His own Son into this world to save you... The charity of Jesus Christ is admirable also in its

extension. As He was sent by His Father for the entire human race, and by reason of His Father, He loved it all, and divided Himself equally among all - and to all He gave fully of Himself without an acceptance of persons..." [cf. Nello, Vol. 2/2, p. 169].

a. The Apostolic Mission, therefore, is a reflection of the total availability of Jesus towards His Father, a privileged expression of His love:

"... 'If I could only find' - the Lord said to a Holy Woman in a vision - 'individuals who would generously give themselves to me without reservations, all that you would ever read in the lives of saints that I did to them, I would do again, also in such persons... How very few are they are even understand what God would do with them if He were not impeded by them in His Plan...' [Retreat to Priests and Seminarians, The Reign of Christ, I Part. II - CS I, p. 171; 172, note 18].

[This was a favorite principle of Fr. Bertoni - not unlike the insight of a modern theologian, Jürgen Moltmann. He said that original sin is not so much the titanic desire to be like God, but the refusal to be what God would like! While exegetically the interpretation does not hold up, nonetheless, this Ignatian principle, quoted often by Fr. Bertoni, offers much food for thought.]

b. Fr. Bertoni himself had such an exalted idea of the Apostolic Mission:

"...Chosen apostles, disciples, ministers... Nobility of an apostolic vocation such as ours is. How important it is that one corresponds to it faithfully... 'Many indeed are called, but few are chosen' [cf. Mt 20:16]. " [CS I, p. 190].

c. The faith of the authentic Christian often implies the acceptance of the unexpected invasion into one's life and daily routine by God whose OT name might have been, in its root, an irregular verb. The faith of the Apostolic Missionary means to restate the initial religious profession, made to the One Who comes to us as the only One who can offer the authentic support for our lives, with His unique stability and power. The gradual discovery of Him and the acceptance of Him who is the rock of salvation, will deliver one from his own individual inconsistency: "...Let us keep firm in the profession of our hope, because the one who made the Promise is faithful..." [cf. Heb 10:23].

d. The full acceptance of the word of God by faith comprised the beginning of the long itinerary, exodus journey of Life - that began for Him in a stable, and ends on the Cross, the threshold to the resurrection. This is called the Christian way. Fr. Bertoni interpreted one of the aspects of the infinite love of Jesus for the Father expressed by means of His availability to His Will.

1.] Even today, the Word of God, that the Church might pronounce, can invade one's life, and way of thinking. Faith presents itself to us as a vivid experience of a more radical availability for Christ.

2.] This makes of our Stigmatine 'encounter' with Him the ultimate meaning of our lives and the basic inspiration of our Apostolic Mission. The 'Amen' of faith presupposes a surrender of oneself to the Person of Jesus Christ. In the risk of faith, sharing in the Mission of Jesus, the Apostolic Missionary will experience an interior liberation. This deliverance, freeing power of availability, assists one to overcome the barriers of one's own spiritual incapacity and limitation. this allows one to go beyond self-imposed limits and restrictions of the lack of self-confidence.

3/] At the same time, it provides Jesus as our Model, that eliminates any subtle pretension, or dependence on one's own talents, real or imagined. All of this leads the Stigmatine to go beyond himself, and communicates a new consistency in or particular community following of Jesus, the Father's Envoy:

"... You should not precede, but follow the Lord. He will illumine your path, and will suggest to you - in response to y our prayer - how to progress and to correspond..." [cf. MP, Jan. 12, 1811].

3. The Specific Stigmatine Means: Abandonment to God, Availability to the Church: the characteristic Christian means, common to the wide variety of paths available to reach the one and the same holiness to which all are called, is that of following, imitating Jesus Christ. It may be that Vatican II with its description of faith offers a good suggestion in its principle of the *obsequium* of faith: "... The 'obedience of faith' [Rm 16:26; cf. 1:5, 2 Co 10:5-6] must be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man **entrusts his whole self freely to God**, offering ' the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals' and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him..." [cf. DV 5].

a. The specific Stigmatine means is that of accomplishing this through **Availability**: abandonment to God, and service to the Church, through the Bishops. As has been noted, Fr. Bertoni received from the Lord a singular grace of contemplating the Most Blessed Trinity. At times, this grace guided him to reflect on the Trinity, drew him interiorly towards this central mystery; at all times, this contemplation inspired the ever-increasing self-giving, surrender to life, and dedication to the Church, no matter what the state of his health. Fr. Bertoni be came more and more united to this mystery with all his heart, and very often with profound sentiments of devotion.

b. He contemplated the Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. These reflections permeated so much of his adult life. Therefore, to speak of Christ in the

spirituality of Fr. Bertoni, means to reflect on the real, central position that Jesus Christ occupied in his prayer, thoughts and writing. From his own lived experience of which he has left some record in the 6000 pages that have come down to us in his own handwriting, we learn that Jesus Christ was the Stigmatine Founder's constant companion. He used expressions that would remind one of the Stigmata: he described his long illnesses as being 'nailed' to his bed [cf. Letter 92, p. 183] - and the many surgical interventions that he endured as being 'wounded', but not yet dead [cf. Letter 104, p. 197]. For Fr. Bertoni, the Will of God was the supreme rule of his life, and we see him explaining the classical theological distinction between the "Will of Sign" [as the Decalogue, precepts of the Church, dispositions of ecclesial superiors] and the divine Will of Good Pleasure [as in the events of everyday life] [cf. Letter 3, p. 51; Letter 47, p. 113].

c. Our central ideal of the **Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops** is the real purpose of offering a competent, available service, and to see this as sharing Christ's own Mission. Christ is presented as the "Eternal King and Lord of All" [cf. CS I, p. 167] - in Whose service all those listening to Fr. Bertoni's preached retreat were being invited to offer themselves to His service. It is always Christ Who is presented as the font and scope of all walks of life. Fr. Bertoni presented Him as the "Incarnate Lord", and every retreatant was being inspired to serve Him ever more [cf. CS I, p. 177]. Fr. Bertoni often spoke of Him as His "Divine Majesty", who yearns to make the ultimate use of our services. It is Christ who calls each one, and invites all to enroll under His standard, banner for service to the Church, to share forever in His life [cf. CS I, p. 185].

d. Thus, his main scope in preaching was to enlist his listeners in the ever greater service of Jesus: this was the motivating power in the activity of Fr. Bertoni's spirituality. It could be said that for him the "assistance [**obsequium**] of bishops' was simply the "incarnation" of his deeper, interior **obsequium** of Jesus Christ. [cf. Letter to Pope Gregory XIV, Ep, p. 240]. The Will of the Father has been made known in Jesus - "to serve Christ" means to give all of oneself for the assistance of Bishops. The Lord Jesus makes His will known, offering His own example and His teaching. This record of His words and deeds has been left for the contemplation, study, experience, of those who believe - that through this prayerful study and imitation, this intimate experience of Jesus Christ might then be translated into love for Him and for an ever more dedicated service of Him. This fuller: "imitation", and closer "following" of Christ, stressed particularly the poverty, humiliation and sufferings of Christ for the Kingdom.

4. Fr. Bertoni's Christological Perspective: Stigmata and Spouse

a. The Humiliated, Crucified Christ, the Servant of the Father: although a relatively recent exegetical discovery, the OT prophecy that comes to us under the name of "Isaiah", in its second part {"The Book of Consolation", Is 40-55] - contains four sections that once may have existed as separate parchments [Is 42:1-6' 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12].

1.] The very powerful perspective - of Christ, in His divine reality is present throughout the thought of Fr. Bertoni. This view of his is a particular aspect of the mastery of Jesus that seems to emerge in his thinking. The aspect of Christ that is presented by Fr. Bertoni places in great evidence the **Kenosis** of Jesus Christ [cf. Ph 2:5-11]. Fr. Bertoni contemplated Him particularly in His poverty and humiliation, willingly lived for the redemption of the world.

2.] Jesus, as "omnipotent God" and "His Divine Majesty" is often presented as the One Who assumed human nature, was the Son of the Virgin Mary. [Fr. Bertoni hardly ever referred to Mary as "Spouse" - it was always as "Virgin", or "Mother"]. This unique divine Personality accepted the Sorrowful Stigmata, always with a view to fulfilling the Will of the Heavenly Father, Whose universal salvific will had chosen to heal the disrupted plan of creation. This aspect of "healing" was also a vital part of Fr. Bertoni's earlier form of his charism - he himself helped out in hospitals until civil law forbade this for those engaged in teaching school. Nonetheless, service in was one of the elements of his vocation [cf. Nello, Vol. I, pp. 240, 244, 247, 472, 641, ff.]. In the sick, one encounters the suffering of Christ in His members. A trace of this perhaps is found in his Original Constitutions:

"... The infirm should be served as brothers in the Lord... one serves them as one would genuinely serve Christ Himself..." [cf. CF 262].

3.] As a lived experience, through humiliation one learns a most painful aspect of the reality of Jesus Christ. At the core of the Stigmata is Jesus Christ, exposed to the jeering crowd, to those who made fun of His basic message: "IF you are the Son of God, come down off the cross!" The deepest meaning of the Stigmata is this **total Self-giving**, of all that is human, so that something of the divinity might come to humanity.

4.] Fr. Bertoni offered his life so that this most special insight into the life of Christ might be lived among those whose lives he so deeply touched. His was an ever greater, and ever more decisive commitment to find in the Lord and in His life, the motivation for an ever greater availability to the ecclesial community - for the ultimate purpose of an ever more committed attitude toward God and the Church.

b. **Christ Our Savior, Spouse of the Church, the Soul:**

1.] To witness to Christ, in the total service of His people, was a characteristic of Fr. Bertoni. In this, he was deeply inspired by the **espousals theme**: Mary and Joseph dedicated to Christ, Mary and Jesus in the service of Christ. Christ is presented by St. Paul as **the Spouse of the Church, Who sacrificed Himself to render the Church holy**: "this mystery has many implications!" [cf. Ep 5:25, ff.]. The underlying image is that of Jesus Christ Who emptied Himself so that the Church might truly be enriched by His own Self-giving [cf. 2 Co 8:9]. Fr. Bertoni was personally convinced that the Congregation was instituted by the Holy Spirit [cf. CF 185] for the competent, dedicated service of the Church, as well as for the praise of God through the assistance of human beings. This goal was to be achieved not only by contemplation of these august mysteries, but by handing on that which had been contemplated [cf. CF 49] - for the conversion of souls [cf. CF 255].

2.] This is the marvelous contemplation of Jesus Christ, as committing Himself, putting Himself on the Cross, for the salvation of humanity. The "greater glory of God" is identified with **the total service of the Church**. The spirituality of Fr. Bertoni is of profound Christological intensity, without forgetting its deep Trinitarian, Eucharistic, and Espousals implications. The Apostolic Mission is being closely associated with Jesus Christ, to love and serve Him, the omnipotent God - and through Jesus, the entire Trinity.

3.] This is the Christ, eminently portrayed by the Scriptures, poor and humble - who perennially invites the believers of all ages, to follow Him, in the communication of His message. The call of Christ is an invitation to share totally in all of His life, all of one's own life: whether eating, or drinking, and in all other factors, of keeping oneself vigilant, of responding to the sense of urgency to His message. It is a matter of following Jesus not only through the ideal decision of planting the Kingdom of God with whatever apostolic talents and graces that one may have.

4.] The call of Jesus Christ is meant to reach every level of human existence. There is no wonder, then, that this all-pervasive call of Jesus means to imitate Him in supporting offenses, misunderstanding and every type of experience of poverty, whether material or spiritual. It is not only the request to carry to term some apostolic undertaking, but far more, the vocation of the Apostolic Missionary means to follow Jesus closely, in the imitation of His life, particularly in His abandonment to the Father, through the Stigmata - as one disdained, and truly poor.

5.] To "follow /imitate/ put on the mind of Christ Jesus serves as the fundamental element of every Apostolic Missionary, of all the baptized. The Stigmatic vocation is a spiritual experience of Jesus Christ, made up of convictions and sentiments from which flow a firm will to persevere. Fr. Bertoni lived this

experience himself, and nourished it with his Eucharistic , biblical contemplation. The vocation finds its expression in the synthesis of his life-long pilgrimage in the ways of the Spirit.

6.] In the mysteries of the life of Christ, as these were perceived by St. Gaspar Bertoni, frequent references were made to His poverty, and the suffering of shame. Following St. Ignatius of Loyola, Fr. Bertoni offers a rather original consideration on manifestations of humility. A superior form, closely emulating that of Jesus Himself, is that of choosing to be poor, rather than enjoying wealth and independence, and he offered this in company with Jesus. Poverty of this nature is a faith-vision, a fruit of profound love for the Person of Jesus Christ. The total dedication of the Stigmatine is a radical dimension of poverty, and an expression of particular love for the Father.

5. Availability to the Father lived as Total Service to the Church:

a. In the entire matter of "holy abandonment", there has to be some practical expression of one's self-giving. On the faith level, this first response, of course, is to God Himself, to His grace, and to one's vocation.

b. However, if this was the sole expression of abandonment, it would simply be that of each Christian. Stigmatine Availability begins with abandonment to God, choosing as one's Model the intimate relationship of Jesus Christ toward His Father, as this is made known to us in the pages of Sacred Scripture, particularly in St. John. The "specific" Stigmatine element would seem to be: the **Apostolic Mission offered for the Assistance [*obsequium*] of Bishops**. This does not mean that each individual confrere would draw up his own "contract" with the various bishops of the world, but rather that the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission would be interpreted through Chapters, General and Provincial, and Local, according to the needs of the Church in the changing times and places. On the concrete and practical level, as the renewed Constitutions read, this involves the mediation of the legitimate superior, both on the ecclesial level as well as those within the Congregation.

c. Stigmatine availability is not some vague sense of "abandonment" to the Lord, but it is an authentic availability, both in the acceptance and in the choosing of a variety of mediations, each representing Jesus Christ. It involves dedicated service to the Shepherds of the Church - the "First Rock", Peter - the bishops, and in a particular manner - the superiors of the Congregation: General, Provincial and Local, as well as the activities to which the community is committed, along with the real needs of God's people and individual talents. The process of discernment of all this demands a real quest for the Lord alone on all levels.

d. In the charism of Fr. Bertoni, these mediations are all subsumed under the bishops, whom Fr. Bertoni considered to have been chosen by the Lord Himself, as noted in the Acts of the Apostles. It is the Holy Spirit Who speaks to us in the Scriptures [cf. Letter 5, Ep 33; Letter 22, Ep 68; Letter 103, Ep 196; Letter 176, Ep 279]. The Spirit selects the Bishops [cf. CF 185 - cf. Ac 20:28].

e. Therefore, the Stigmatic vocation has a multiple consideration:

- there is the immediate commitment to the concrete apostolate, to which each one is invited to be totally dedicated;

- an over-riding self-giving to the inexpressible mystery of God and His Kingdom.

f. With the great consideration of the ultimate Cause in all this, there is absolutely no indication of any lessening commitment to the tasks at hand. A specific apostolic mission is the most important, and it is this that gives meaning to one's routine life of each day.

g. However, beyond the daily commitment, the Stigmatic spirit would ask of each one that attitude, an interior disposition of will, and on-going preparation, **availability** for what the apostolate requires, and to where it is intended to lead. In the light of the new ecclesial spirit, this involves great patience and effort on the part of the superiors and confreres, **to find the ever greater service of the Lord**, together with the community. In the ideal of the Stigmatic vocation, this commitment of each one is hoped for, to experience this mystery of Jesus, ever ready and capable of serving the Father's Will.

h. Such availability is one of the most convincing affirmations of the mystery of Jesus. Such "abandonment" to a higher ideal eliminates all that is partial, provincial, or folded in on oneself. Such availability is based on a theology and spirituality of total Incarnation. It seems that Jesus, in the total mystery of His **Kenosis**, leading to the fullness of God, is the salvific mystery of Life.

i. This presents a delicate area of striking a balance - every human being, through Baptism, is consecrated into the Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ [cf. Rm 6:1, ff.]. In striving to follow Him in this way of Holy Abandonment, one will live an experience expressed through the continual quest for what the Lord truly wills. This vocation will invite the spirituality of the "pilgrim", the "nomad", the "over-night guest." The individual who truly wants to follow the Lord will often be invited to leave "his father's house behind", like a modern-day Abraham, Moses, or the Spouse of Psalms 45 - invited to go on an unknown, life-long Exodus journey. Fr. Bertoni sought Jesus Christ not only in the pages of sacred

Scripture, but also in his own spiritual and apostolic living of the very Mission of Jesus Christ, received from His Father.

6. A Total Incarnation in the Stigmatine Vocation would lead each one to think of a number of concrete forms of the **Kenosis** of Jesus Christ. Here are three possibilities:

a. **Obsequium**: this will be treated more fully further on, and also in other parallel studies. To live a truly Christian abandonment, modeled on the Incarnate Son of God, there has to be a concrete form of this in daily life. The form lived by our Founder was a total self-giving in the apostolate, fully in accord with the directions, the limitations, imposed by the Diocesan Faculties received from his bishop. The **Assistance of Bishops** serves as a concrete form, a kind of "sacramentality" of the divine will in the life of Fr. Bertoni in what concerns the Apostolic Mission. The Stigmatine Founder sought as an ideal, the ever greater service of the Church through the assistance of her bishops.

b. **An Instrument** in the hands of the Lord: if not a definition, this was a way of looking at the service a Stigmatine can offer. The human nature of Jesus is a "Conjoined Instrument", hypostatically united to the Divinity. Steeped in the Thomistic tradition of the **Instrumental Cause**, important in earlier years of theology to describe the authorship of Sacred Scripture, and also for the human nature of Jesus being united to His Divinity - Fr. Bertoni looked upon the Apostolic Missionary deeply united to the Principal Agent, Jesus Christ: by the life of sanctifying grace, the Apostolic Missionary is called to imitate the hypostatic union, to be an Instrument joined to the Lord: ordinary talent close to the Lord can perform extraordinary wonders in the Apostolic Mission.

c. **The "Espousals Principle"** might be based on St. Ignatius' ideal expressed in his letter to one of his Provincials, in which he stated that an ordinary "instrument" performs extraordinary tasks when united intimately to the artist-genius: whereas sometimes great talent accomplishes very little separated from Jesus Christ. In His **Espousals Principle** [already explained above] Fr. Bertoni declares that the most intimate following/imitating of Jesus is that of Spouse: one not attracted by the reward, or enjoying the sonship; but the one truly interested in the **Spouse of Christ, the Church**. Fr. Bertoni offers a traditional view of the Church in his early sermons - but his view of **service of the Church**; in the beginning, this meant a total dedication to the bishops, as this passage might indicate:

"...By the name of 'Church' [in our service of the Church] ... is to be understood the bishops, and the Supreme Shepherds of the flock of Christ. The Bishops in the Church are the sole judges authorized by God. The custom of the Church confirms this. Furthermore, not all are doctors, as St. Paul says [cf. 1 Co 12:29]. To lead the flock to

pasture in knowledge and doctrine is proper to the Shepherds, i.e., to the Bishops. Lastly, a certain doctrine contrary to all this cannot be, nor should it be ignored in these times - it has already been rejected by a legitimate censure [cf. Denzinger # 1310.

"The Holy Spirit has placed these Shepherds to rule the Church of God, which Christ acquired with His Blood: from these legitimate Pastors we ought to depend, and to await from them the proposition, explanation and declaration of the true sense of the Word of God, revealed in the Scriptures, or in Tradition, as the unique infallible rule of our thinking and working. We ought to follow this word faithfully and constantly, if we wish to arrive at the knowledge of the truth and the possession of that supernatural, eternal beatitude we hope for in union with God: 'may peace come to those who have followed this rule...' [cf. Ga 6:6 - Vulg.]...This is the Star that we should follow..." [cf. Epiphany 1806, Sermon 35. PVC pp. 259, ff.].

In accord with modern developments in Ecclesiology, some aspects of Fr. Bertoni's view may seem somewhat "dated". There is a most valid point, however, and that is that for the Stigmatine the needs of the Bishop have to exercise a central role in the choice of the Apostolic Mission to which the community dedicates itself, **anywhere in the Diocese and in the world.**

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SECTION THREE
THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE STIGMATA OF THE RESURRECTION
and the
APOSTOLIC MISSION

[A BIBLICAL MEDITATION]

The Gospels speak either implicitly, or explicitly of the Stigmata of the Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus [cf. Mt 27: 35; Mk 15:24; Lk 22:33 - all speak of the Crucifixion']. John alone specifically mentions the wound in the side: In their presentations of the post-resurrectional Jesus, both Luke and John manifest an interest in the wounds of Christ, retained in His resurrected body:

Look at my hands and my feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves ... And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet...' [cf. Lk 24:36-43].

Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes that they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe ... Then Jesus spoke to Thomas: Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side... [cf. Jn 19:24-9].

Luke presents the hands and the feet, whereas St. John, who had reposed on the breast of Jesus [cf. Jn 13:25; 21:20] emphasizes the hands and the side¹. The Sacred Stigmata of Jesus offer a synthesis of the Paschal Mystery, and open the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures present the Wounds of Christ, a close connection with this mystery and the healing mission of the Holy Spirit are offered to the contemplation of the Church. Pentecost is the New Covenant, written on the hearts of flesh - vulnerable indeed, but also to be healed by the coming of the Spirit.

The Stigmata of Jesus, and in particular the wound in the side which was inflicted after His death was ascertained, indicate the departure of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit. These inter-connected themes have long been reflected upon by believing peoples and have a particular message of joy and hope for our time. There is a rich biblical tradition behind these few verses, which indeed offer further inspiration and confidence for the Apostolic Mission.

¹cf. I Bonetti, CSS, *Le Stimmate della Passione*. Rovigo 1952, pp. 43, ff.; id., "Le Stimmate della Passione nella teologia e nella spiritualità", in: *La Sapienza della Croce oggi - Atti del Congresso Internazionale - Roma - 13/18 ottobre 1975*, pp. 489-496

1. The Stigmata and Scripture

The marks retained in the resurrected body of Jesus are recorded, as has been seen, particularly by Luke and John. These two evangelists have been combined to produce a devotion offered to the Five Wounds of our Lord². The themes implicit in this mystery are most varied and profound, as the following synthesis might indicate:

- A. Biblical Connections
- B. Patristic Interpretations
- C. Monastic Interpretations
- D. Statements of the Magisterium

A. Biblical Connections

The depth of the biblical background to these culminating mysteries of the Life of Jesus Christ is immediately evident when one notes their many interpretations, even in recent times.³

1. Genesis: themes have come to light in recent commentaries:

a. The New Creation: The 'breathing' of Jesus upon His Apostles [cf. Jn 20:22] is an episode that calls to mind God's creative breath. In Jn, the 'breathing' is closely associated with the power of forgiveness. However, the mission of the Apostles inspired by the Holy Spirit, is variously presented by the Evangelists, as to preach, teach, forgive sins. These are an indication of the coming of the New Creation, the New Covenant unto the remissions of sins.⁴

This action is evidently reminiscent of the Creation story of Genesis: [Yahweh] breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being [cf. Gn 2:7]⁵. As Jn's Gospel opens with references to creation ["In the beginning... and that life was the light ..."], it is on this note that it comes to a close.

² cf. R. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*. 13-21. The Anchor Bible, Vol. 29 A. Garden City NY: Doubleday 1970, pp. 1021, f.

³ E. Malatesta, SJ, "Blood and Water from the Pierced Side of Christ (Jn 19:34)", in: *Segni e sacramenti nel Vangelo di Giovanni*. Sacramentum 3, Roma: Studia Anselmiana 3, 1971, pp. 171-174, passim.

⁴ cf. R. Brown, pp. 1022, ff.

⁵ *The Jerusalem Bible*. London: Dalton, Longman & Todd, Ltd 1966.

In addition to the Midrash of the Book of Wisdom [cf. Ws 15:10, ff.], the new Creation implicit in Ezk's field of dry bones [cf. Ezk 38:3-5], is brought about by another "Son of Man", who inspires new life⁶.

b. The sacrifice of Isaac: {Gn 22}⁷: John seems to have read the connection between the offering of Isaac, and the 'gift' of the Only-begotten Son of the Father [cf. Jn 3:16, ff.]. The striking parallels between Isaac and Jesus would be the offering of the Only-begotten Son, on whom the Covenant depended that was to be extended to all the nations of the earth. The Only-begotten [*monogenes*] is a title found in Hebrews [cf. 11:17, ff.], seeing this as a symbol of the Resurrection [cf. also Rm 8: 2, 32]⁸.

The typology of Isaac constitutes one of the scriptural bases seeing the death of Jesus as a true sacrifice. It sheds some light on the Johannine title of 'Lamb' and the typology of the grain of wheat. At the price of His blood, Jesus has obtained light and life, and the passing over from darkness and death of slavery to the Promised Land⁹.

2. Exodus Symbolism: This abounds in John. In addition to the Paschal Lamb, the first title given to Jesus after the "Word", salvation exchanges darkness for light, a Genesis idea [cf. Jn 8:21]. Slavery for service [cf. Jn 5:24]. Jesus fulfills many exodus images:

- the Bronze Serpent [cf. Jn 3:14];
- the Manna [cf. Jn 6];
- the Source of Living Water from the Rock [cf. Jn 7:38];
- the Fiery Cloud [cf. Jn 8:12].¹⁰

A special indication of the broad biblical back-ground in John's wording: "as scripture says" [cf. Jn 7:38]: the miracle of the Rock has wide biblical support [cf. Ex 17:6; Nb 20:11; Is 48:21; Ps 78" 15, ff.; 105:13-16].¹¹

⁶ cf. R. Brown, p. 1037.

⁷ cf. R. LeDéaut, *La nuit pascale*. Roma: Institut Biblique Pontifical 1963, pp. 133-213; J. Swetnam, SJ, *Jesus and Isaac - A Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Light of the Agedah*. Roma: Biblical Institute Press 1981.

⁸ cf. F. M. Braun, OP, *Jean le théologien. Sa théologie. Le mystère de Jésus Christ*. Paris; Gabalda 1966. Vol 3, 1, pp. 157, ff.

⁹ cf. F. M. Braun, p. 165.

¹⁰ cf. F. M. Braun, p. 164; cf. J. Danielou, SJ, *Les figures du Christ dans ; 'Ancient Testament Sacramentum Futuri'*. Paris: Beauchesne 1950; id., *The Bible and the Liturgy*. Ann Arbor MI 1956; cf. R. LeDéaut, pp 324, ff.

3. Liturgy:

a. The Pasch: at the beginning of Jn's Gospel [cf. Jn 1:29, 36], Jesus is referred to as the "Lamb". This almost naturally lends itself to the symbolism of the Paschal Lamb, as the feast is mentioned at least nine times in the Gospel [cf. Jn 2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:4]. The festival envelops the entire life of Jesus¹².

The Evangelist offers several hints to the fact that Jesus indeed died as a Paschal Lamb:

- the Jews did not enter Pilate's Palace to avoid defilement, so that they would be able to eat the Passover; [cf. Jn 18:28];

- twice John states that this is the Day of Preparation, just before sunset [cf. Jn 19:31, 42], the precise hour of the immolation of the Paschal Lamb in the Temple;

- the bones of Jesus would remain intact [cf. Jn 19:36; cf. also Ex 12:10, 46; Nb 9:12]¹³. The ancient ritual of the Pasch included not breaking the legs, while the actual wording may be from the Psalm: 'Yahweh will not let one [bone] be broken' [of the virtuous man] [cf. Ps 34:19]¹⁴.

b. Tabernacles: This joyous autumn festival is the possible setting for the renewal of the kingship of the Lord, and as a renewal of the Covenant. This is a thesis being continued in recent times. The 'ingathering' of still another harvest is a further indication that the Lord kept His word concerning the abundance of the land of 'milk and honey'. Such an atmosphere offered the natural background for a religious lesson. The water festival would be a sacred memory of the great primordial victory over the forces of evil. Fervent prayer was offered that God would come and create anew.¹⁵

¹¹ cf. F. M. Braun, *Jean le Théologien. Sa Théologie. Le Christ, notre Seigneur, hier, aujourd'hui, toujours*. Paris: Gabalda 1972, Vol. 3, 2, pp. 50, ff.

¹² cf. F. M. Braun Vol. 3, 1, pp. 160, ff.

¹³ S. Lyonnet, SJ, "Il sangue nella trafittura di Gesù", in: *Sangue e Antropologia Biblica*. Roma 10-15 marzo 1980. Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue 1981. Vol. II, pp. 740, ff.

¹⁴ cf. R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*. Herder's Theological Commentary on the NT. New York: Herder & Herder 1968. Vol. I, p. 122.

¹⁵ cf. S. Mowimckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. tr. by D.R. Ap. Thomas. London: Oxford . Basil Blackwell 1967. Vol. I, pp. 130-136; J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*. Studies in Biblical Theology. Second Series 32. London: SCM Press 1976.

This festival is specifically present in Jesus' prelims of the Living Water [cf. Jn 7]. The streams of living water are explicitly connected with the Holy Spirit¹⁶. The Liturgy for the Feast of Tabernacles included prayers for rain, rites which commemorated the water miracle of the Exodus [cf. Ex 17:1-7; cf., 1 Co 10:4]. The readings concentrated on passages foretelling the life-giving water for Zion [cf. Zc 14:8; Ezk 47:1, ff.; cf. Jn 4:10]¹⁷. The references of the readings concerning the living waters looked back to the harsh desert experience [cf. Dt 8:11, ff.], and looked forward to the eschatological New Creation [cf. Is 43:3, f., 20; Jr 2:13; Zc 14:8].¹⁸

c. Expiation: there is an element of expiation in the memory of the original Exodus festival. Ezechiel speaks of making atonement for the Temple itself, by 'taking blood from the sacrifice for sin and putting it on the doorposts of the temple' [cf. Ex 45:18-24]¹⁹.

d. New Covenant: In the Exodus night, the Israelites renewed the Pact made long before with God [cf. Ws 18:6]. The Ritual is placed in a context of the perpetual Covenant made with Abraham [cf. Gn 15:17, ff.]. In dying as the Lamb, Jesus assumed the mystery of this Feast when the Israelites renewed their confidence and trust in their God²⁰.

In 'speaking of the Spirit' [cf. Jn 7:39], there is the prophecy of the streams of living water and the out-pouring of the Spirit, which go back to the Book of Consolation [cf. Is 44:3]. For the Prophets, the living waters are seen in a spiritual sense. The transformations that they will achieve are eminently of the oral order. Zechariah's record of the promise of the purifying waters [cf. Zc 13:1] are very closely associated with Ezechiel's thoughts on the New Covenant [cf. Ezk 36:25, f.] - the clean water will bring with it a new heart and a new spirit.²¹

Furthermore, Thomas' confession in recognizing the Lord Jesus in His Stigmata, clearly shows that those who were "not God's People", now participate in a kind of Nuptial Covenant: 'I am your God, and you are My people' [cf. ex 19:5, f.; Dt 7:6, f. ; Jr 31:31-34; Ezk 11:20; 36:28; Is 54:4, ff.]. This Profession: 'My Lord and my God' [cf. Jn 20:28] - can only be pronounced when the Spirit is poured out in Baptism and the

¹⁶ cf. S. Lyonnet, p. 743; cf. I. de la Potterie, SJ, "La sete di Gesu' morente e l'interpretazione giovannea della sua morte in croce", in: *La Sapienza della Croce oggi - Atti del Congresso internazionale, Rome 13/18 ottobre 1975*. Torino: Lehmann 1976. Vol. I, pp. 33-49.

¹⁷ cf. *The Jerusalem Bible*, note, Jn 7:L38 +.

¹⁸ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol., 3, 2, pp. 151, f.

¹⁹ cf. S. Lyonnet, pp. 741, ff.

²⁰ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, pp. 163, ff.

²¹ cf. F.M. Braun, Vol. 3, 2, p. 153.

Eucharist [cf. 1 Co 12:3]. The wide majority of believers who have never 'seen' are full members of the New People of God sharing in this Covenant²².

4. The Prophets: For the "Fulfillment of the Scriptures" there are repeated references to the Prophetic Tradition. Some of these connections are the following"

a. The "Servant of Yahweh": along with the explicit reference to the 'healing wounds' of the Servant [cf. Is 53:5; cf. I P 2:25], there seems to be an allusion to the protection of the Servant prefigured in not breaking the bones of the Paschal Lamb²³. Likewise, in the title of "Lamb" and other Johannine references, a common interpretation makes the connection with the sacrifice of Jesus [cf. Jn 1:29; 12:38]²⁴.

b. Jeremiah: In addition to an over-all association with Jesus, there is a specific fulfillment of the New Covenant theme [cf. Jr 31:31-34]. Although John does not use the word "Covenant", his whole idea of salvation shows the divine purpose being fulfilled in Jesus, in Whom the New Covenant is restored²⁵.

c. Ezekiel: the priest-prophet offers several themes for consideration:

1.] The New Temple: and its streams of living water, which bring health and abundant harvests [cf. Ezk 47:1-12].

2.] The New Creation: In the description of the effects of this abundant water is most reminiscent of a New Creation, or a return to Eden. The vision of the dry bones [cf. Ex 37] is fulfilled in Jesus, Who exercises the life-giving power of the Spirit of God²⁶.

d. Zechariah: Particularly in the sections called 'Deutero-Zechariah', several themes are found here to which John alludes either directly, or indirectly:

1.] The "Pierced One": [cf. Jn 19:37] has a specific reference to Zechariah [cf. 12:10]. this image is also found in the Apocalypse [cf. 1:7], as the fulfillment of the final times²⁷.

²² cf. R. Brown, p. 1048.

²³ cf. R. LeDéaut, p. 330.

²⁴ cf. P. Grelot, *Les poèmes du Serviteur - De la lecture critique à l'herméneutique*. Paris: du Cerf 1981, *Lectio Divina* 103, pp. 180-183

²⁵ cf. J. Terence Forestell, *The Word of the Cross*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press 1974. *Analecta Biblica* 57, p. 179.

²⁶ cf. J. T. Forestell, p. 100.

²⁷ cf. R. Schnackenburg, Vol. I, p. 122.

Zechariah recalled the death of King Josiah [cf. 2 K 23:29; 2 Ch 35:19, ff.; Jr 22:10, ff.], eulogized as one 'who had set his heart on the Lord, and in godless times he upheld the cause of religion' [cf. Si 49:1-4]. From this historical background the 'Pierced One' is projected forward. Those who 'look' on the Pierced One are in a similar situation to those who 'look' upon the Bronze Serpent [cf. Jn 3:14]. In both cases, there is intended an act of faith, to which has been opened the mystery of salvation²⁸. There is thus fulfilled the mysterious 'divine teaching' by the Father [cf. Jn 6:45], by the Son [cf. Jn 8:28], and by the Holy Spirit [cf. Jn 14:25, ff.]²⁹.

2.] The Shepherd who is 'struck': Deutero-Zechariah speaks of a mysterious Shepherd whose death brings about a testing, and a bettering of the flock [cf. Zc 13:7-9]. This text is recalled by Jesus on His way to the Agony in the Garden [cf. Mt 14:27, ff.]. This 'Shepherd' is not merely 'pastoral', but there are evident 'soteriological' overtones: 'The Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep' [cf. Jn 10:11, ff.]³⁰.

3.] The Eschatological Fountain: In their earlier history, Israel's hopes were struck to the ground with the death of young King Josiah, on the plains of Megiddo [cf. 2 K 23:28-30; 2 Ch 35:20-27; Jn 22:19, f.] - a true Old Testament 'Armageddon' for the 'cause of religion.' However, Deutero-Zechariah does not remain riveted to the past, but looks forward toward the unknown future, 'when a fountain will be opened... for sin and impurity...' [cf. Zc 13:1, ff.]. This calls to mind the new life, the New Creation, symbolically flowing from underneath the Temple in the vision of Ezechiel [cf. Ezk 47:1, ff.]. The Apocalypse will use this to describe Eden returned, or Paradise regained: '... on either side of the river were the trees of life... the leaves of which are the cure...' [cf. Rv 22:2, f.]³¹.

The streams of living water, announced by Jesus as flowing from His side - and the water John saw coming from the wound in Jesus' breast, have an abundant biblical preparation and later application [cf. Ezk 47:1-12; Zc 13:1; 14:8; Rv 21:6; 22:1, ff.]. This is like a New Creation: the waters coming from the Temple will flow east and west, in summer and winter ['couples of totality'] and will be offered to anyone who is 'thirsty'.³²

²⁸ cf. F.M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, p. 179.

²⁹ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, p. 180.

³⁰ cf. R. Schnackenburg, Vol. 2, p. 295.

³¹ cf. S. Lyonnet, pp. 742, ff.

³² cf. F.M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, p. 168.

5. First Letter of John: In the background, there seems to be some kind of a polemic. The 'false doctors' distinguished between the Jesus at the moment of His Baptism, indicated by the water - from the suffering and bloody Christ:

... Jesus Christ who came by water and blood, not with water only, but with water and blood; with the Spirit as another witness - since the Spirit is the truth, so that there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and all three of them agree... [cf. 1 Jn 5:6-8].

Against the falsifiers, the Epistle is insistent in proclaiming that Jesus is indivisible [cf. 1 Jn 1:3; 2:1; 4:2; 5:5, 20]. The Son of God was incarnate through the manifestations at the Baptism, and the glory of Tabor - and also in giving His Blood for the world [cf. 1 Jn 5:5].³³

The Savior has come to lead God's people into the light, to communion with God and to live in the truth [cf. 1 Jn 1:7]. The anointing of the Word under the action of the Spirit, will lead this people back to the Father [cf. 1 Jn 2:27]. It is the blood which saves this people from sin. 'God's seed' remains within His people [cf. 1 Jn 3:9] and thus, all are to be confident in Him.

There is no contradiction between the salvation assured by faith in the Word, and that achieved through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Truth is represented in the water, and the sacrifice of the Lamb in the Blood. These are two aspects of the one 'salvation', or passing over from darkness to light. All is carried in response to the Father's salvific will, brought to fulfillment by both the resurrected Christ and the Spirit. The witness of the heavenly Father reveals His mysteries [cf. Jn 1:18], is indeed the Savior of the world [cf. Jn 3:16; 4:47], not with the water alone, but with the united witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood.³⁴

In the life of Jesus Himself, the water may reflect the Baptism in the Jordan, the beginning of His public life; while the blood refers to the sacrifice on Calvary, the ultimate accomplishment of His earthly mission in expiation from sin [cf. 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; cf. also Rm 3:25; Heb 2:17].³⁵

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³³ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, p. 169.

³⁴ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, p. 172.

³⁵ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 2, p. 148.

B. Patristic Interpretations

This aspect was researched some years ago³⁶, and recently re-studied and verified³⁷. Briefly, the Fathers reflected on Jn 19:34 in the following manner:

- Water: refers generally to baptism, the Font of Life;
- Blood: the Mystery of redemption, the blood of martyrs, the Eucharist,, the price of regeneration, the Holy Spirit, purification from sin;
- Both Blood and Water: symbolize the Church, the sacraments, the Mysteries of Incorporation, the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Hope, reconciliation, the New Testament, and a foreshadowing of salvation.

In John's parallel texts [cf. Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:8], there is a slight shift in emphasis: a reversal of the positions of the 'blood' and 'water':

... immediately there came out blood and water... [cf. Jn 19:34].

... there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood...' [cf. 1 Jn 5:8].

These are often seen as symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist: both are 'witnesses' in that the light and the life of the Spirit are projected over the teachings of the Church, and diffused into the hearts of the faithful:

1. Baptism: this offers a variety of relationships:
 - to the death and resurrection of Jesus;
 - to the Spirit, and one's birth from on high;
 - to the faith, and the accomplishment of this 'birth'.

Baptism can be seen on Calvary, due to the biblical connections between the witnessed phenomenon and the streams of living water [cf. Jn 4:5, ff.; 7:37, f.; 19:34, ff.]. It is questioned whether all these insights were present to the evangelist, but there is general support in the early Church, due perhaps to an exegetical interpretation centered on Baptism.

2. Eucharist: There is support for reading 'blood' as a symbol of the Eucharist. Nonetheless, a valid interpretation would be that Baptism receives its generating power from the blood of Christ. However, there are good reasons to see this out-

³⁶ cf. S. Tromp, SJ, "Nativitas Ecclesiae ex Corde Iesu in Cruce", in "Gregorianum" XIII [1932], pp. 489-527.

³⁷ cf. E. Malatesta, pp. 179-181.

pouring of the water, the blood and the Spirit as indicative of the sacraments of Initiation³⁸.

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C. Monastic Application

The devotion to the Sacred Stigmata developed primarily in monastic circles. The first traces of it in the West are seen in the seventh and eighth centuries in devotional texts used in monasteries of the British Isles. Through the missionary expansion, this reached the continent. The essential content of the devotion corresponds to the intuitions of the Fathers, but developed along these lines:

1. Healing: the Stigmata of the Passion are seen as medicine for the wounds of humanity. The contemplation of the Stigmata inspired compunction for sin, together with confidence of being pardoned.
2. Hope: The devotion to the Stigmata received a great impulse from the Cistercians, as the celebrated commentary on the 'Song of Songs' by St. Bernard testify:

'My dove hiding in the clefts of the rock' [Ct 2:14]... Another writer glosses this passage differently, seeing in the clefts of the rock the wounds of Christ. And quite correctly, for Christ is the Rock. Good the clefts that strengthen our faith in the resurrection and the divinity of Christ...! Within them the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a net...'³⁹.

3. Compassion: An Exhortation of St. Augustine on Virginity directed the attention to the contemplation of the Wounds of the Crucified, and the Scars of the resurrected, as an incentive to fidelity.⁴⁰
4. Imitation: The spirit of St. Francis inspired this new insight into the devotion⁴¹.

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³⁸ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 2, pp. 147, ff.

³⁹ cf. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, III, Sermons 47-66. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications 1979, p. 142.

⁴⁰ *De Virginitate*, c. 54 - PL 40, 428.

⁴¹ cf. I Bonetti, "Le Stimmate della Passione nella teologia e nella Spiritualità", in: *La Sapienza della Croce oggi - Atti del Congresso Internazionale. Roma 13/18 1975*. Torino: LDC Leumann, Vol. 2, pp. 489, ff.

D. Magisterial Reflections

These may be summarized in meditations presented through Councils and a modern Encyclical:⁴²

1. The Council of Vienne: In His assumed human nature, the Word of God chose not only to be nailed to the Cross and to die upon it for the salvation of all, but also - after having given up His Spirit, He sustained the piercing of His side with a lance. From the sources of water and blood there was formed the one and immaculate virgin, Holy Mother the Church, the Spouse of Christ, just as from the side of the first man who was asleep, Eve was formed, and joined to Him in marriage. This truth is the fulfillment of certain aspects of the first Adam, who according to the Apostle, was the 'pre-figure of the One to come' [cf. Rm 5:15], in our second Adam, i.e., Christ ... [cf. D-S 901].

2. 'Haurietis Aquas': The Encyclical of Pope Pius XII [May 15, 1956] quotes the Prophet Isaiah [cf. 12:3] promising:

And you will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation... [cf. Is 12:3].

The Encyclical then offers a commentary on a number of texts already seen reflecting the mystery of the 'Living Waters' [e.g., Ex 17:1-7; Nb 20:7-13; Ezk 47:1-12; Jn 7:37-39; 1 Co 10:4; Rv 7:17; 22:1], and makes frequent reference to the 'wounded side' of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.:

... Under the influence of this love, our Savior, by the outpouring of His blood, became wedded to His Church: 'By love, He allowed Himself to be espoused to His Church.' Hence, from the wounded heart of the Redeemer was born the Church, the dispenser of the Blood of the Redemption - whence flows that plentiful stream of sacramental grace from which the children of the Church drink of eternal life, as we read in the sacred liturgy: 'From the Pierced Heart, the Church, the Bride of Christ, is born... And He pours forth grace from His heart...'⁴³

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3. The Second Vatican Council: also refers to these mysteries several times:

The Son, therefore, came on mission from His Father... By His obedience, He brought about redemption. The Church, or, in other words, the Kingdom of Christ, now present in mystery, grows visibly in the world

⁴² cf. E. Malatesta, pp. 176, ff.

⁴³ Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*. Orlando FL: Sacred Heart Publication Center 1974, n. 76; cf. also nn. 5, ff., 91-93.

through the power of God. This inauguration and this growth are both symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus [cf. Jn 19:34], and are foretold in the Lord's words concerning His death on the cross: 'And I, lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself'... [Jn 12:32] [LG 3].

He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby 'dying', He destroyed our death and, rising, He restored our life.' For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament which is the whole Church... [SC 5].

It is notable that in these texts there occurs the nuptial theme of Jesus with the Church [cf. Ep 5:21, ff., the wounds of Christ and His being 'sent.' Pope Paul VI related the devotion to the Sacred Heart, to pastoral zeal, and the mission of the Church⁴⁴.

2. The Holy Spirit and the Apostolic Mission

There is an intimate connection between Jesus 'giving up His spirit' [cf. Jn 19:30], the '**Kenosis**' [cf. Ph 2: 6, ff.] brought to its ultimate expression and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. From the Cross, there springs forth in the resurrection of the New Adam the eschatological humanity in the Holy Spirit. This opens each heart to faith in the Crucified, to pour into it the love of God⁴⁵.

In bowing His head and giving up His Spirit [cf. Jn 19:30], Jesus' Last Breath is seen as His Gift of the Holy Spirit. From beginning [cf. Mt 3:16; Jn 1:33] to the end of His public life, Jesus has been guided by the Spirit. In His Resurrection, in His glorified Body, He is fully imbued with life-giving power.⁴⁶

...

A. The Out-pouring of the Spirit

The thirst of Jesus [cf. Jn 7:37; 19:28] is also intimately tied with the sending of the Holy Spirit. The aspersion of the pure water will bring about the renewal of hearts. A 'heart of stone' is impervious to 'knowledge' of God, while only a 'heart of flesh' can be capable of knowing the Word. The Spirit will be charged with

⁴⁴ Paul VI, Letter sent to the Heads of Religious Orders propagating the Cult of the Sacred Heart, dated February 6, 1965, in: *Sacred Heart Publication*, p. 56.

⁴⁵ cf. Louis Bouyer, 'Kénose et Révélation de l'Esprit', in: *Le Consolateur - Esprit - Saint et vie de grâce*. Paris: du Cerf 1980. Vol. 21, pp. 446-448, passim

⁴⁶ cf. Notes in *The Jerusalem Bible* [Mt 3:16 +; JN 1:35 +; 4:1 +].

penetrating the 'thirsty' with the Truth; they will be imbued with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Who has received the Spirit in abundance.⁴⁷

The death of Jesus on the Cross is seen as a scandal, illogical, madness [cf. 1 Co 1:17, ff.]. The Spirit comes to give witness [cf. Jn 15:16, ff., 26, ff.; 16:7], and this agrees with the witness of the water and the blood [cf. 1 Jn 5:6, ff.].⁴⁸

In continuing the Mission of Christ, the Spirit will achieve the following:

1. The Children of God: There has been a gradual preparation for the Trinitarian generation of the children of God. In this sense, the blood and water represent the coming of the Spirit and this New Life.⁴⁹

The 'forgiveness of sin' [cf. Jn 20:22, f.] is one expression for the "Apostolic Mission". The Spirit is represented both in the cleansing by the water and purifying with the blood. This is the New and definitive Covenant The New Creation is a consecration of the New People of God.⁵⁰

2. Peace: In walking on the water, Jesus offers His 'peace' [cf. Mt 14:27; Mk 6: 50; Jn 6:20]. In the appearance to the Apostles after the resurrection, Jesus offers this greeting [cf. Jn 20:19] - here, it is far more than a customary greeting, it is a profession, echoed in the letters of St. Paul.⁵¹

The greeting of 'peace' which echoes so frequently in the Scriptures [cf. Gn 15:1; 21:17; 26:34; 35:17; 46:3; Ex 14:13, f.; 20:20; Nb 14:9;; 21:3, f.; Dt 1:21, 29-33; 7:18, 21; 10:12, f. ; 20:1-4; 31:6, 8] - just to mention some of the passages] is often a prelude to a mission. Fear has given way to peace, and Jesus has kept His promise [cf. Jn 14:27, f.].

3. Joy: This trait is indicative of the blessings of the final times. The Apostles, most humanly "frightened" by the ordeal, often compared it to the pangs of child-birth [cf. Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 16:16, f.; 42:14; 66:7-14; Jr 6:24; 13:21; 30:6; Jn 16:21]. These give way to joy once the delivery is made. Once the 'stipulations' of the New Covenant are carried out, being baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus [cf. Rm 6:1, ff.], and the observance of the Word, the definitive peace and joy of the final times will come.

⁴⁷ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 2, p. 55.

⁴⁸ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, p. 170.

⁴⁹ cf. R. Brown, p. 1037.

⁵⁰ cf. R. Bown, p. 1043.

⁵¹ cf. R. Brown, p. 1021.

Divine Filiation is the source of peace and joy. In the Apocalypse, this is presented in a nuptial context [cf. Rv 19:7; 21:1-4], a well-known theme for the New Covenant. The presence of the Lord is the source of it all⁵².

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B. The Apostolic Mission

The mystery of the Incarnation serves also to reveal the inner life of the Trinity - Jesus in His human nature is Son, Witness, Image of the heavenly Father. His 'being sent' into this world, offers an insight as well into His eternal Mission. The subsequent sending of the Apostles and the establishing of the Missionary Church, all share in His Mission through their Filiation in the Heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit. In describing this Mission, Jesus has recourse to the "Law of Holiness":

You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect... [cf. Mt 5:48]

Be compassionate as your heavenly Father is compassionate [cf. Lk 6:36].

It is in this sense that the Apostles are 'sent':

As the Father sent me, so I am sending you... [cf. Jn 20:21].⁵³

In the discussion with the woman of Samaria, Jesus comments that the 'fields are white ready for the harvest' [cf. Jn 4:35]. This is read in the context of the New Covenant, one that will go far beyond Judah, for Jesus indeed is 'the Savior of the World' [cf. Jn 4:42, f.].

The theme of the 'mission' of the Son of God is attested to in all four Gospels, but with far more insistence in John, where this is most often presented on the lips of Jesus Himself [cf. Mt 10:40; Mk 9:37; 12:6; Lk 9:48; 10:16; Jn 3:17, 34; 5:37; 6:57; 7:28; 8:42; 10:36; 17:18; 20:21].

Fr. Congar, OP has pointed out that it is an exaggeration to stress the emphasis on the Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles over the glorified Jesus of St. Paul. The glorified Christ and the Spirit share equally in the Apostolic Mission, as noted by St. Thomas: Whatever is done by the Holy Spirit is accomplished also by Christ - the salvation of the human race is achieved by the Incarnate Son and by the Gift of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴

⁵² cf. R. Brown, pp. 1035, ff.

⁵³ cf. F. M. Braun, Vol. 3, 1, pp. 93-95, passim.

⁵⁴ cf. Y. Congar, OP, pp. 16, 21, 24.

The Church shares in this Mission of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The Apostolic Mission is presented in slightly different fashion by each of the Gospels:

- Mt 28:19: presents it as baptizing in the Trinitarian Formula, and teaching the observance of the ten commandments;
- Mk 16:15: sees it as going out to the whole world and proclaiming the Good News to all creation;
- Lk 24:47: speaks of witnessing and preaching repentance;
- Jn 20:21, ff.:⁵⁵ speaks of the forgiveness of sin, but in the context of a much broader power. The Father had 'consecrated' Jesus and sent Him into the world [cf. Jn 10:36], and now Jesus sends the Apostles into the world [cf. Jn 17:38].

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Conclusion

Jn's great interest in the drama immediately following the death of Jesus is the sending of the Spirit, a very special out-pouring of divine love. A kind of "**divine kenosis**" is evident: God did not spare His only Son [cf. Jn 3:16; Rm 8:32], and Jesus emptied Himself, sacrificed Himself for our sake [cf. 2 Co 8:9; Ph 2:5, ff.; Ep 5:1, ff.] - and the Holy Spirit will be 'sent' and will not speak 'as from Himself' [cf. Jn 16:13].⁵⁶

The "Easter Faith" is intimately associated with the death of Jesus, the wound in the side, and the sending out of the Holy Spirit, passes through a variety of stages:

- from ignorance to recognition;
- from absence to presence;
- from fear to peace and joy;
- from doubt, to bold ecclesial faith⁵⁷.

The wound in the side of Jesus Christ manifests the opening of a New Creation, the New Covenant in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Sacred Stigmata are also associated with the Resurrection and Pentecost.

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⁵⁵ cf. R. Brown, pp. 1029, ff.

⁵⁶ cf. S. Lyonnet, pp. 739, ff.

⁵⁷ cf. D. Mollat, SJ "La foi pascale selon le chapitre 20 de l'Evangile de Saint Jean. (Essai de théologie biblique), in: *Resurrexit, Actes du Symposium international sur la résurrection de Jésus. (Rome 1970)*. ed. par R. Dhanis, SJ, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1974, pp. 316-319.

Section Four

Reflections on the Stigmatine Founder's First Constitution: *Missionarii Apostolic in Obsequium Episcoporum*

A. Apostolic Missionaries

Introduction:

[1] Fr. Bertoni received the honorary title of "Apostolic Missionary" from the Holy See with a prescript dated December 1817. This was given to him because of Parish Missions preached under the direction of a Monsignor Louis Pacetti in May of 1816. Shortly thereafter, all parish missions were forbidden by government decree, which remained in force all throughout Fr. Bertoni's entire life.

[2] A discussion in the Stigmatine community has existed through the years, and there are two positions regarding the precise meaning of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission:

[a] One of these would interpret Fr. Bertoni's ideal of Apostolic Mission as restricted primarily to the preaching of Parish Missions, as the central apostolate to which all else would be subordinated. This seems to have been the position of Fr. John Mary Marani, the Stigmatine Founder's first successor as Superior General, and for many years his confessor. However, there are several statements from Fr. Marani which may not be contradictory, but do present some difficulty in interpretation:

(1) A Report of Fr. Marani, dated December 14, 1853. In this report addressed to the civil and religious authorities, Fr. Marani wrote - naturally 'hiding' the real purpose of the Stigmatine community: "... the scope of the Institute of Don Bertoni is that of assisting the Bishop in his needs, and therefore, also the Pastors, in their necessities and needs. Fr. Bertoni was most responsive to them..."⁵⁸ In this statement Fr. Marani does not specify what these ministries are.

[2] In a later document, called a *Compendium*, written some six months later, there is a different presentation of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission - for some confreres, to be understood that since Fr. Marani was writing to Church authorities, he could pull out all the stops, as it were, and relay the "true" physiognomy of the Community. Fr. Marani wrote:

The members of this Community are called Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance [*obsequium*], i.e., the help [*auxilium*] of the Bishops, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St.

⁵⁸ cf. CS II, pp. 142, ff.

Joseph her Spouse ... This Society proposes for itself the purpose of assisting [**obsequi**], i.e., helping [**auxiliari**] the Bishops in those areas in which they need help on account of the changing times and changing circumstances... The principal areas in which the Sodality offers its help [**auxilium**] are, in addition to the [parish] missions, the following... [there is found here a lengthy list of apostolic services]..."⁵⁹

There are some distinct additions here: a preference for the word **auxilium** over the Founder's preferred **obsequium** - and the addition of the **praeter missiones** - meaning that the central ministry of the Stigmatine Community would principally be the Parish Missions, and then everything else. Fr. Marani repeated this in a no-published document dated December 21, 1853: "... the schools are only accessory to the established goal of Fr. Bertoni..."

This insistence on Parish Missions then became repeated fairly often during Fr. Marani's administration which lasted from 1853-1871, when he died. A good example of this would be the short work Fr. Marani wrote to give a resume' of the Community, with the purpose in mind of obtaining Church approval. This work was entitled **Cenni intorno alla Congregazione**, dated September 30, 1855:

... The Community is not limited to this, or to that type of occupations, or to restricted cases, or matters. Rather, it is meant to serve God in all those areas and in every good work, for the assistance of souls. For this, the Congregation desires to have men ready and prepared, among those who have embraced this manner of living. It is, however, proper to this new congregation that, in addition to occupying itself in the Sacred Parish Missions, that it should teach ... [and then once again there follows a long list of other apostolic activities].⁶⁰

In accord with this idea, the Constitutions of the Founder would be read accordingly. [In another study of this series, **Fr. Gaspar Bertoni 's Original Constitutions and Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ, De Religione Societatis Iesu** - it is most evident that the vast majority of these constitutions are copied verbatim particularly in all those sections dealing with the "end", "scope", "Missions" of the Community. [CF # 162, for example, speaks of prayers for the "Missions" - taken word for word from Fr. Suarez, which embodies St. Ignatius' idea of Jesuits praying for their own Apostolic Mission] - and this is interpreted by some confreres to mean "Parish Missions." However, if this position is true - there is hardly any other specific mention of Parish Missions in the Original Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni - whereas he does dedicate a number of Constitutions to the instruction of youth, to the teaching

⁵⁹ cf. CS II, pp. 155, ff.

⁶⁰ cf. CS II, p. 177.

of Catechism, the guidance of seminarians. At any rate, even those familiar with the Stigmatine spirit for years have thought - and still do - that the "Apostolic Missionary" - either originally in the Founder's intentions - or, by force of circumstances, has shifted. For many, the original idea was much broader than Parish Missions.

[b] The second interpretation: and the one better known to most confreres up to the present time, is that "Mission" in Fr. Bertoni's mind, means something more broad. Several General Chapters have looked at it as ***quodcumque Dei verbum ministerium, 'any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever.*** Arguments for this would be, for example - a few years after Fr. Marani's death, a unanimous House Council at the Stimite sent in a petition to the General Chapter, asking that the schools of the Stimite be reopened - and the first reason given was: because *schools correspond to **one of the principal ends of our Congregation, which was born, and became loved, through teaching.***

This document was dated February 24, 1874, less than three years after the death of Fr. Marani - and a good sixteen years before the General Chapter of 1890, when the schools were considered ***an end equal to that of parish missions.***

Furthermore, it is significant that our Founder has not left any description of the Parish Missions, how they should be conducted, what preparation for them, and the like - in such sharp contrast to St. Alphonsus and St. Paul of the Cross. Their congregations have among their principal works the preaching of Parish Missions - and, as would be expected, a good part of their original Constitutions is dedicated to the particular manner of conducting them.

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1. Fr. Bertoni's Own Words:

a. There is much evidence that the Stigmatine Founder was deeply influenced by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his sense of "Apostolic Mission":

Introduction to the Retreat: In a visit with a few companions to the altar of St. Ignatius, I experienced much devotion and recollection, great interior sweetness, some tears, even though the visit was brief. It seems as though the Saint was welcoming us, and invited us to promote the greater glory of God, like he did, and by the same ways, even though did not all those means that he was able to employ...⁶¹

In a letter to Mother Naudet, Fr. Bertoni wrote:

⁶¹ cf. MP, September 15, 1808.

Fr. Galvani is totally Ignatian. He has offered me the Stimata as an opportune place to establish a Congregation of Priests who would live under the Rule of St. Ignatius...⁶²

c. In a document that has come down to us under a descriptive title in the Stigmatine Founder's own handwriting, ***Autografo del Fondatore***, the Stigmatine Founder offers this general presentation of the basic Stigmatine purpose, without any specification of ministries:

[1] The purpose of this Union, or Congregation of Priests is to serve God, our Lord, and His Church gratuitously, in so far as any expectation of earthly reward is concerned.

[2] In all ministry on behalf of souls to abide strictly by the direction of the bishop, and to obtain from him the general faculties and permissions.

[3] To be ready to answer any call of the bishops to preach, to hear confessions, to give instructions, whether in the city, or in the country, or in any place of the diocese, in the seminary, or to the laity.

[4] In order to do this with greater dispatch, it is necessary to be free from the particular and perpetual care of souls in parishes or fixed places, especially where it may entail the obligation of residence to which an ecclesiastical dignity is attached.

[5] For the attainment of this end, each one is to attend seriously to the perfection proper to our state.

[6] Furthermore, all are called to apply themselves earnestly to the acquisition of all the ecclesiastical sciences, especially moral theology.

One of the great "principles" of Fr. Bertoni is the two-fold increase: growth in spirituality, and development of intellectual competence, to serve the varying and changing needs of the bishops, '**anywhere in the diocese or the world.**'

d. In his Original Constitutions, there is one rule that seems to go to great lengths to describe the multiple and varied services to which the Stigmatine Congregation is called to dedicate itself in the assistance of Bishops - a rule almost totally taken *verbatim* from Suarez' Commentary on the Constitutions of St. Ignatius:

⁶² cf. Letter 54, August 17, 1816.

The scope of this community is to offer service [*obsequium praestare*] to the Church, under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper tasks of its vocation. This is at times a very difficult thing. Should it seem to be exposed to dangers when this lofty ideal is compared to human frailty, nonetheless this proposal of our devotion is not imprudent or temerarious - and for these reasons:

first, because this vocation is entrusted not to human strength, but is left up to the grace of the Holy Spirit to be carried out: 'He who has begun and inspired this work, He Himself will carry it to perfection' - if He is not hindered by us. For this is the special grace of this vocation, and it is superior to all dangers and difficulties.

secondly, by this goal that we have, we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, nor ever to go to one place rather than to some other one. We propose to follow the direction of the Bishop whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God. This is a cautious means to employ, to keep from erring in the ways of God. It is in the providence of religion that takes over, both in disposing and preparing members, as well as in choosing them, confirming and supporting them in all hope" [CF # 185].

2. In Fr. Bertoni's actions:

In his broad vision, the charism of the Stigmatine Founder has room for the talents and good will of those who really desire to serve the Church through the Bishops. The following are just a few examples taken from our early history:

a. Fr. Modesto Cainer: perhaps because of a total lack of self-confidence, and also because of enormous personal difficulty, Fr. Cainer experienced in various phases of the priestly ministry, he never felt up to accepting the office of a regular school teacher, or confessor. And the Stigmatine Founder never forced him to do so, and was content in asking him to fill in once in a while as a substitute teacher...⁶³

b. Fr. Michaelangelo Gramego: we have this extraordinary description of him:

...The dread of public speaking actually took his breath away, and this happened each time the Founder asked him to teach catechism at the Most Blessed Trinity Parish - the excessive hardship that this caused him really made him sick. Fr. Bertoni was most pleased with his heroic

⁶³ cf. *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli*, 1866, p. 47.

efforts to obey; however, he never again forced this hardship on him..."⁶⁴

c. Fr. Louis Bragato: a real indication for many interpreters of the extent of the Stigmatine Founder's ***obsequium Episcoporum*** was his willingness and decision to sacrifice his better man for the needs of the bishop, the Church, over the particular needs of the Stigmatine Congregation. A good example of this happened in July 1835. The Bishop of Verona had been asked to obtain an Italian speaking Court Chaplain for the Royal House of Hapsburg, in Vienna. Fr. Bertoni responded by offering Fr. Louis Bragato, his close friend and confidant. The incident is noted in the hold House Chronicle:

... Since it is the will of God, manifested through our most zealous Bishop, that our brother, Fr. Bragato, be taken from us, and leave for assignment in Vienna. Tomorrow, July 6, 1835, he will leave on the express. We will all pray for him so that God might indeed bless the work that he is going to undertake. 'Hallowed be Thy Name!' Thy Will be done!'

A few months later, Fr. Bertoni wrote to Fr. Bragato:

... your person, which was the dearest and most useful that we have...⁶⁵

There is no doubt that in the struggling community of the Stimate at that time, the absence of such a valid collaborator, must have left a deep hole.⁶⁶

d. Fr. Matthew Farinati: In 1817, the Vicar General of the Diocese, Monsignor Dionisi, asked Fr. Gaspar to send one of his priests to assist those with typhoid fever in the public prisons. Fr. Bertoni accepted this invitation, and among all who had volunteered for it, he assigned Fr. Farinati. Father went most willingly to carry out this ministry of charity. However, from this work in the prison compound, Fr. Farinati contracted an illness which led him to a early grave. Fr. Bertoni always envied the lot of Fr. Farinati, who was called to sacrifice his life in the exercise of his ministry, and to die a martyr of charity.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ cf. *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli*, p. 53

⁶⁵ cf. *Epistolario*, p. 311.

⁶⁶ cf. Nello, *Modello di Sant'Abbandono*, p. 174.

⁶⁷ cf. *Breve Cronaca*, I, pp. 27, ff.; Nello, pp. 173, f.

3. Some of the 'Varied and Proper' Ministries of Fr. Bertoni's Own Life:

These were either conducted by him personally, or authorized by him for the early Stigmatine community:

a. 1800-1816:

Assistant in his home Parish of St. Paul's in the 'Campo Marzio' section of Verona:

- 1.] Indefatigable studies;⁶⁸
- 2.] Preacher, confessor, catechist;⁶⁹
- 3.] The "Missionary to the Youth" - the Apostle of Youth. The Oratories. Retreats at the seminary for priests and seminarians;⁷⁰
- 4.] Spiritual Director at the Convent of Blessed de Canossa. Bishop's consultant for theological matters.

a. Assistant in the Parish of St. Firmus 'Major'

- 1.] Spiritual Director of the local clergy;⁷¹
- 2.] Leader of theological discussions for priests;⁷²
- 3.] Varied Ministry in the Diocesan Seminary;⁷³
- 4.] Hospitals and Prisons;⁷⁴
- 5.] The Parish Mission at St. Firmus' [May 4-26, 1816].⁷⁵

b. The Stimate: 1816 - until the closing of the Schools

- 1.] Teaching school - November 1816;⁷⁶

⁶⁸ cf. Stofella, *Life* pp. 48, ff.

⁶⁹ cf. ib., pp. 51, ff., cf. *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, Sermons from his early priesthood.

⁷⁰ cf. Stofella, pp. 54, ff.

⁷¹ cf. ib., pp. 75, ff, 89.

⁷² cf. ib., p. 78.

⁷³ cf. ib., pp. 79, ff., 94, ff.

⁷⁴ cf. ib., p. 100.

⁷⁵ cf. ib., pp. 115, f.

⁷⁶ cf. CS I, p. 414; CS II, p. 25; Ep, p. 238; BC I, p. 66; Stofella, o.c., pp. 136, ff.

- 2.] Marian Oratories;⁷⁷
- 3.] Confessor and Spiritual Direction of priests and religious;⁷⁸
- 4.] Other varied apostolates:
 - a.] Ministry of the Word - to various groups, but especially to Priests and Seminarians; Novenas, Octaves, Tridua, Spiritual exercises, Meditations, examinations of Seminarians' Vocations; assistance to the sick and dying; specialized catechetics.
 - b.] Ministry of the Press.⁷⁹
- c. After the Closing of the Schools at the Stimate:
 - 1.] Spiritual Direction, Confessor;⁸⁰
 - 2.] Marian Oratories;⁸¹
 - 3.] "... Especially Christian doctrine...";⁸²
 - 4.] Seminary Professors;
 - 5.] Specialized ministry among the priests and seminarians.

4. The Testimony of Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, a Novice of the Founder:

Frs. Marani and Bragato came to the Stigmatine Founder as ordained priests - while Fr. Lenotti, his second successor, was trained by him in his Novitiate. Fr. Lenotti has left some important lines on discerning the real intention of Fr. Bertoni for his community. Fr. Lenotti served as Novice Master from about 1855-1865, and during these years he delivered a number of 'Domestic Exhortations' on the Original Constitutions of Fr. Bertoni. Here are a few of his ideas:

... An Apostolic Missionary is a religious - soldier [endowed] with a spirit of sacrifice... of generosity... *Paratus ad omnia* [prepared for all]... we are Missionaries, not only when we are actually engaged in the field of battle,

⁷⁷ cf. Stofella, pp. 143, ff.

⁷⁸ cf. ib., pp. 151, ff.

⁷⁹ cf. ib., pp. 153, ff.

⁸⁰ cf. .BC I, p. 67.

⁸¹ cf. ib., pp. 67, ff.

⁸² cf. ib., pp. 69, f.

for example: in the pulpits, in the missions, or in the confessional - but also while we are at home...⁸³

... It is seen clearly that Fr. Bertoni's intention was that of instituting a Congregation, which, just like the Company of Jesus which is in a special way dedicated, oriented toward the service [*ossequio*] and the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff - our Congregation is dedicated and determined in a most special and outstanding manner to the service and assistance [*ossequio*] of the Bishops. However, there is this difference: that while the Professed of the Company of Jesus do make a vow of obedience to the Roman Pontiff, our Professed do not make a vow of obedience to the Bishop. However, they do strive in every way to help him, to assist him obsequiously, as all our members are in a particular way dedicated to him .

... my brothers, it is necessary to learn how to manage well the Divine Word, by study and with holy readings, and to employ it well according to the circumstances: in the confessional, in the prisons, in the pulpit, on the rostrum, from the altars, in giving Missions, Retreats, conducting the oratories, while being engaged in friendly conversations..⁸⁴

We are Missionaries to serve God, our King, Jesus Christ, our Captain - and to serve the Church, our neighbor, by prayer, good example, study, preaching.⁸⁵

What is the purpose of our Congregation? Therefore, let us strive to carry it out through this means of private conversations, etc. How much good can we accomplish in this way! By this means of private conversations what enormous good for souls did not St. Francis Xavier accomplish, that great Apostolic Missionary...!⁸⁶

It is interesting to note that St. Francis Xavier was not engaged in Parish Missions and yet merits the title "Apostolic Missionary".

5. The Testimony of Some Contemporaries of Fr. Bertoni, his ecclesiastical superiors with whom his plan was shared, or to whom it had been submitted:

a. Monsignor Belloni, the Vicar of the Cathedral Chapter of Verona :

... they are priests who, by their special ecclesiastical profession, dedicate themselves and spend themselves exclusively for the

⁸³ cf. CS III, pp. 404, ff.

⁸⁴ cf. CS III, pp. 409, ff.

⁸⁵ cf. CS III, p. 411.

⁸⁶ cf. CS III, p. 531.

assistance [*ossequio*] of the Diocesan Ordinary, for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. They do this at any time, and in every area of the sacred ministry, in accord with the needs. They give retreats to the Clergy, or to the people, are dedicated to catechetics in any church where they may be sent, in the explanation of the Gospels, in the various novenas, or octaves, and in the assistance of the sick, or those in prison, for the conversion of the wayward. They give of themselves based on the most healthy principles, showing prudent and tireless zeal...⁸⁷

b. Bishop Joseph Grasser to whom Fr. Gaspar confided his whole apostolic dream. On June 18, 1831, Bishop Grasser wrote a letter of recommendation to the Holy Father:

... We testify that Fr. Bertoni is a Priest of holy life, endowed with outstanding doctrine and charity, who has made himself all things for all, especially in the training of Seminarians, in the giving of retreats, spiritual direction, the instruction of the youth in catechism and virtue, and is outstanding for his assistance to the clergy...

c. Bishop Mutti the next Ordinary of the See of San Zeno testified:

... Fr. Gaspar Bertoni's Congregation has no other purpose than that of offering **any kind of spiritual service to the Diocese, in accord with the wishes of his Ordinary...**⁸⁸

d. Bishop Riccabona has left this testimony:

From its beginning, this congregation has never ceased from existing and of showing itself most dedicated to **any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever** [*qualunque*] to which they might be invited by their Bishop ... they are assiduous in hearing confessions, preaching, in giving missions, and especially in giving retreats to the clergy, in explaining the Catechism, in observing all the Feasts in the Marian Congregations in their two churches, in assisting the dying, those in prison, those condemned to capital punishment; furthermore, they supply in the Seminary as Professors of philosophy and theology ... and they render their services to the great satisfaction of all...⁸⁹

⁸⁷ cf. *Novissima Positio super virtutibus*, Jan. 11, 1966, p. 14.

⁸⁸ cf. *Summarium Additionale*, Doc. XXIII, p. 250; cf. also CS II, p. 149.

⁸⁹ cf. *Summarium Additionale*, Doc. XXIII, p. 251; cf. also CS II, pp. 151-154.

e. Fr. John Perrone, SJ: this theologian, praised by Cardinal Newman, was one of the Consultors for the old S. Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He was assigned the task of reading and evaluating the Stigmatine Founder's Original Constitutions. Among his remarks, he stated the following:

... The end of this Union is to supply Bishops in whose dioceses this Union might be found, with Evangelical workers, who are always prepared for every request of these bishops, in the judgment of their respective superiors, to offer any ministry whatsoever that the Bishops might choose to ask them...⁹⁰

6. Jesuit Influence:

The Apostolic Mission of the Stigmatine Congregation seems to be the same as that of St. Ignatius, keeping in mind the more limited 'means' that the Stigmatine Founder believed he would have at his disposal. A brief look at St. Ignatius' ideal might shed some light on our own:

a. The 'Formula' of St. Ignatius:

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, should after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind: He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for the purpose to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine - by means of:

- public preaching
- lectures
- and any ministration whatsoever of the word of God;

and further, by means of:

- the Spiritual exercises,
- the education of children and unlettered persons to Christianity,
- and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful, through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments.

⁹⁰ cf. CS II, p. 167.

Moreover, this Society should show itself no less useful in reconciling the estranged, in holily assisting and serving those who are found in prisons and hospitals, and indeed in performing any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.

Furthermore, all these works should be carried out altogether free of charge and without accepting any salary for the labor expended in all the aforementioned activities.

b. The entire Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions is dedicated to the 'Missions' - in this broader Ignatian sense. In this section, there is an important Constitution that serves as a guide-line in the actual discerning which ministry should be chosen with such an open and broad apostolic ministry:

To proceed more successfully in this sending of subjects to one place or another, one should keep the greater service of God and the more universal good before his eyes as the norm to hold oneself on the right course. It seems that in the vineyard of the Lord, which is so extensive, the following procedure of selection ought to be used. When other considerations are equal, that part of the vineyard should be chosen which has the greater need ... consideration should also be given to where the greater fruit ... [to go places] where our indebtedness is the greater ... to do the more universal good, the more it is divine ... for that reason, preference ought to be shown to the aid which is given to the great nations, such as the Indies, to important cities, or to universities which are greatly attended by numerous persons..⁹¹

c. The Jesuit **Epitome** to the Constitutions describe 'Mission; as follows:

By 'missions' are meant those apostolic expeditions, undertaken by order of the Supreme Pontiff or, of the Superiors of the Society, for the ever greater glory of God and the assistance of souls.

The 'Missions' are among the principal ministries of the Society; and therefore, all the members ought to be sent on them, and be always ready [***semperque parati***] to travel to different places, and to live life in any part of the world, where the greater service

⁹¹ cf. Constitutions SJ, # 622

of God *[maius Dei obsequium]* might be hoped.⁹²

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Summary

[1] As an instrument of Church renewal, the Parish Missions have long served as a privileged means, and may soon reappear as such, as in the life of St. Anthony Mary Claret.⁹³ The "Mission" idea came to him through St. Alphonsus Liguori. He, like St. Paul of the Cross, established his community basically for the Parish Mission Apostolate. In his turn, St. Alphonsus did not create the Parish Mission, but this particular form of preaching was very well known in the Naples area ...⁹⁴ As is known, St. Gaspar Bertoni received the title Apostolic Missionary from the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, December 20, 1817. In his second Constitution [CF 2], Fr. Bertoni quotes at some length from this Decree, in describing the *Modus* of the *Finis* [his first Constitution] for his Congregation: ***Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops.***

[2] St. Ignatius, however, had a broader concept of "Apostolic Mission" - even though the saint never formally defined the term. Nonetheless, the entire Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions [## 607-654] is dedicated to the Distribution of the Incorporated Members [i.e., the 'Professed'] in Christ's Vineyard and their relations with their Fellow Men. The first two chapters of this Seventh Part are:

Chapter I: Missions from the Holy Father.

Chapter II: The Missions received from the Superior of the Society.

a.] The Stigmatine Founder developed this Seventh Part of St. Ignatius' Constitutions by following a most developed Jesuit Commentary on the Ignatian Rule by the Jesuit Theologian, Fr. Francis Suarez, entitled ***De Religione Societatis Iesu.*** For the Stigmatine Founder, St. Ignatius' Part VII is Part IX of the Original Constitutions of the Stigmatines. The reason for the numerical difference is that Fr. Bertoni wrote in as separate "Parts" of his Constitutions some matters that for St. Ignatius were entitled *General Examen and its Declarations* and *Particular Examen*, including ideas such as Admission of Candidates and Formation. Immediately after his explanation of "Mission", the Stigmatine Founder following St. Ignatius, as Part X describes the important Union in the Congregation.

⁹² cf. Epitome, # 612.

⁹³ cf. J. M. Lozano, CMF, *Mystic and Man of Action - St. Anthony Mary Claret - A Study in the Development of His Spiritual Experience and Doctrine.* tr. by J. Daries, CMF, Chicago Claretian Publications 1977.

⁹⁴ cf. Lozano, p. 209; cf. also P. Hitz, CSsR, *To preach the Gospel.* New York: Sheed & Ward 1963, pp. 107-110.

b.] In the Stigmatine Original Constitutions [## 161-163], following Suarez very closely, Fr. Bertoni explains the 'means' by which the Congregation is to work for the salvation of humanity. In this section are explained ***the various and proper ministries*** of the Stigmatine vocation [cf. CF # 185].

c.] Like St. Ignatius, Fr. Bertoni has a very broad concept of ***the ministry of the Word of God***. For example, he states:

Furthermore, the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls; an end which in good part the Congregation intends to achieve through conversation with its neighbors, by speaking to them with gentleness and discretion about spiritual matters. Hence, the religious confreres are to draw much profit from the conversations they have among themselves - most often, these should be about the things of God [CF #255]

These "Private Conversations" were thought of by St. Ignatius as one of the privileged means for continuing the good effects of preaching. It was a means much employed in the early Stigmatine community.. The Stigmatine Founder thought also that regular letters among the confreres assisted the bond of unity in that charity can be attained in living the sublime ideal of a united plurality, each with a different area of appreciation, dispersed anywhere in the diocese and the world. Fr. Bertoni himself was a great letter write.

d.] One of the basic Stigmatine Apostolates is that of serving the Church in the Ministry of Reconciliation. Therefore, the Ministry of the Word of God was admirably exercised here, in being a 'friend' to the penitent:

First of all, to carry out completely the office of Confessor, often it is necessary to treat familiarly with the penitents, even outside of Confession: either for their instruction, or their Spiritual comfort - as also to keep them in the practice of frequent Confession and in living a good life... [cf. CF # 227].

3. Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical, ***Evangelii Nuntiandi***, [December 8, 1975] highly praises this form of evangelization: the Holy Father stated that alongside the proclamation of the Gospel made in the usual manner, this other form of transmission of the Word, person, to person, remains most important.

... The Lord Himself often made us of it - as witness His personal conversations with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, with the Samaritan woman, with Simon, the Pharisee, and with others - as with the Apostles. In the last analysis, is there any better way of transmitting the Gospel than by sharing with others one's own experience of the faith? It should not happen that with the urgency to announce the Good News through to the masses, this

should lead to the neglect of that announcement by which the persona. Conscience is reached, deeply moved by a most extraordinary word that one individual receives from another. We cannot praise sufficiently those priests who, through the sacrament of Reconciliation, or through pastoral dialogue, show themselves ready to guide others in the ways of the Gospel, to confirm them in their efforts, to lift them up should they fail, and to assist them always with discernment and availability.⁹⁵

4. Following the choices made by the General Chapter of 1970, there are three particular areas of the Ministry of the Word evident to our Stigmatine history, that ought to be within the competence of the community. The Congregation of the sacred Stigmata is being called now to serve the Church under 'any ministry of the Word of God, whatsoever; but particularly in these three areas:

- preaching;
- assistance of priests, seminarians and religious;
- his apostolate to the youth.⁹⁶

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B. The Apostolic Mission of Preaching

This field of the Sacred Ministry is most evident in the Stigmatine Founder's own life, as well as found in his words:

God raises up in the Church individuals then illumined by the Holy Spirit, or preachers to correct and repair, put to right the scandals, disorders, weaknesses of Prelates...⁹⁷

He saw the preaching vocation as a whole vocation:

We intend to speak here about a vocation vested with special circumstances... this is the vocation of the new ministers, endowed with the new spirit and called by the Holy Spirit, the Innovator and Restorer of all things, to renew and restore His ministry, and through this - the Church. This He will do by abolishing the old human spirit, exciting the

⁹⁵ cf. EN # 46

⁹⁶ cf. CF ## 163, 164; Commission of the IXth General Chapter, 1887

⁹⁷ cf. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, Commentary on First Kings - Mss B # 5110.

new and divine spirit, based on the indefectible rectitude and firmness of the First Rock.⁹⁸

On this reading [I Samuel] we say that the actual carrying out of the vocation of the new ministers is rather their cooperation offered to Divine Providence in the reform of His elect - both of the People as well as of the Minister. Their task is to put aside the old spirit, hardened and rebellious against His light. this cooperation flows from the innovation of the divine spirit, which comes through the grace of the Holy Spirit, Creator ...The Spirit sometimes illumines even those outside the faith, as the Book of Job says: 'He smashes great men's power, without inquiry, and sets up others in their places' [Jb 34:24]/ Also, the Book of Wisdom: 'In each generation she passes into holy souls, and makes them friends of God and Prophets' [cf. Ws 7:27].⁹⁹

These "New Ministers" will be called to assist in the renewal of the Church:

This is the reform that shows how capable these Ministers are, full of gratitude to God for having illumined them. They are most ready for their great fervor, even when they are newly converted, to serve God in great undertakings.

The ideal of the Ministry of the Word is: Not to preach to the pocketbooks, but to the minds; not to the ears, but to the hearts; not to be praised, but to be followed; not to draw attention to themselves, but to draw their listeners to Christ. From this faith, they will not be separated even in death ... they have espoused the truth with the ring of faith. This is the character of these ministers, renewed and reformed by the new Spirit with firmness and constancy. They do not pervert the series of truths, saying that some propositions are true, but leaving others aside, or by suggesting rather doubtful propositions which admit of false explanations... It is so necessary to speak clearly and openly...¹⁰⁰

Based on St. Gregory the Great, St. Gaspar Bertoni 's hope was for a band of competent, specialized ministers of the Word, to assist in the necessary renewal, purification of the Church.

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⁹⁸ cf. Fr. Bertoni's Meditations to the Seminarians of Verona, on First Kings - Mss B 11]

⁹⁹ cf. Fr. Bertoni, Meditations on First Kings - Meditation 20. Mss B 703

¹⁰⁰ cf. Nello, II-II, pp. 250, ff.

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C. The Apostolic Mission to the Clergy, Religious, Seminarians

Fr. Bragato spoke of the years during which Fr. Bertoni came to the Seminary of Verona to preach to the Priests and Seminarians. A part of Fr. Bragato's testimony reads as follows:

... It was used to make such a deep impression on me [during the Retreats preached by Fr. Gaspar in my seminary years] when I would hear of the fruit that the priest was called upon to give by his example: that integrity, seriousness, holiness, that he ought to inspire in all. And this is just what I saw in Fr. Bertoni.¹⁰¹

Fr. Bertoni lived in a period of intense renewal in the Diocese of Verona under a succession of Benedictine Bishops. Fr. Ceresatto wrote about the Stigmatine Founder:

As far as the clergy of Verona is concerned, Fr. Bertoni was called by Providence to be their Apostle ... His preached Meditations and Instructions on First Kings resembled a trumpet call concerning the urgent reform of the priestly spirit.¹⁰²

Good example, the witness of the priestly and religious life, was the "second purpose" for which Fr. Bertoni established the Community.¹⁰³

D. The Apostolic Mission to the Youth: Oratories and Catechism

Fr. Giacobbe, the Stigmatine Founder's first biographer, stated in the Diocesan Process:

I can recall how Fr. Girardi, Pastor of St. Paul's on a First Communion Day, gave to Fr. Bertoni the responsibility to begin a youth group. From this, Fr. Bertoni began the Marian Oratories which then spread to other Dioceses.

...

Therefore, Fr. Bertoni served as the Apostolic Missionary in the quality of Preaching he offered the diocese in which he was born, lived, died and always loved -

¹⁰¹ cf. Stofella, *Life of Fr. Bragato*, mss. f. B. - Nello II-II, p. 588.

¹⁰² cf. Ceresatto, *Life of the Founder*, pp. 172, ff.

¹⁰³ cf. Nello, "The Plan of Renewal of the Priestly Ministry", p. 221.

with a few outside forays in his life-time. He was likewise the Apostle to the Clergy, Seminarians and Religious and served as the Apostle of Youth. He dreamed for a good part of his life of a truly dedicated, competent, available group of Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops, anywhere in the Diocese or the world.

He expressed this in some of his Prayers:

Grant that we might come to know the spirit of your Spouse, the Church, so that by knowing her, we might love her; by loving her, we might desire her; and by desiring her, we might open our mouths to recommend her, and our hearts ...

We adore Your most wise government, and we pray You to have us imitate Your Spouse in being conformed to her in everything, and truly to respond to these words of yours ...: 'Whoever wishes to come after Me, let him take up his Cross...'.¹⁰⁴

His spirituality saw a key aspect from the life of Jesus in His personal relationship to His Father:

The correspondence of the elect is manifest with obedience to the Church, diffidence toward oneself, and confidence in Christ, and with working in accord with discipline.¹⁰⁵

The sacramentality of God's Will was clearly the needs of the Bishops:

'Take command, God, as befits Your power, that power, God, You have wielded on our behalf' [cf. Ps 67:28] - so that as we receive the mission, from that one font, through the Catholic Bishops, and sharing in the jurisdiction of that one High Priest, and font of all jurisprudence in our Church, we, too, might share in His firmness.¹⁰⁶

The Stigmatine Founder nourished a high ideal for a select group of Ministers truly dedicated to the Cause of the Lord:

The Lord separates and distinguishes in His army a division of perfected workers, in the confession of the true faith, and in the exercise of all the virtues ... This will be a division of heroic workers, imitators of the Apostolic Life. So, with this army of exemplaries, united

¹⁰⁴ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Mss B 4933; 4693.

¹⁰⁵ cf. ib., Mss B 4997.

¹⁰⁶ cf. ib., Mss B 6282.

together to come to the help of their neighbor, and to weaken the forces of evil...¹⁰⁷

The Stigmatine Founder was deeply committed to community life, for the sake of prayer and apostolic preparation. He also saw great strength in united forces that come together:

In preaching and joining with companions and disciples of the same spirit... In this society there should be order; a freedom in all and obedience in all.¹⁰⁸

In Fr. Bertoni's apostolic dream, the Stigmatines are called to be Missionaries - living the life modeled on the first Apostles - their **obsequium** to the Bishops flows from Christ's loving obedience to His Father.

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E. *In Obsequium*

This expression, which appears in Vatican II, was very dear to the Stigmatine Founder. Some initial idea of it may be had by looking at the use the recent Council made of it:

... Hearing the Word of God with reverence [***obsequium***] and proclaiming it

confidently..."[cf. DV 1].

... The 'obedience of faith' [cf. Rm 16:26; cf. 1:5; 2 Co 10:5] must be given to God Who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission [***obsequium***] of intellect and will to God who reveals, and freely assents to the truth revealed by him...]DV 5].

The consideration of the word, which is most difficult to translate into English, will follow these directions:

- in Sacred Scripture;
- in the Eucharist;

¹⁰⁷ cf. ib., Mss B 6585.

¹⁰⁸ cf. ib., ## 6918; 6920.

- in St. Ignatius;

- in Fr. Bertoni.

1. Usage in Sacred Scripture:

While the contexts in these texts may not help much, perhaps a general idea might be obtained by citing the few texts in which ***obsequium*** is found:

2 K 5:1, ff.:

Naaman, army commander to the king of Aram, was a man who enjoyed his master's respect and favor, but the man was a leper. Now on their raids the Arameans had carried off from the land of Israel a little girl who had become a servant of Naaman's wife.

The text here is not asking one to become a "little girl" in regard to the Church, unless in the context: 'Unless you become as little children...' However, it is asking the total self-giving of the slave in the interests of the Church - the great model here could be Paul, the 'slave/servant of Jesus Christ.'

Jn 16:2:

They will expel you from the synagogues and indeed the hour is coming when anyone who kills you, will think he is doing a holy duty for God.

The Latin Vulgate translation here is ***obsequium***. Again, it is not that ***obsequium*** is asking for fanaticism - but, all authentic service in the Church indeed is a sacred service. Even in English, 'service' can mean military, social, enforced, free, devotional, etc. The service of the Church in Fr. Bertoni's heart was indeed a holy deference toward God.

Rm 9; 4:

I would willingly be condemned and be cut off from Christ, if it could help my brothers of Israel, my own flesh and blood. They were adopted as sons, they were given the glory and the covenants, and the ritual was drawn for them, and the promises were made for them...

Here the English translation does not assist us much, in that it better reflects the original text and not the Latin translation. However, the ideal of St. Paul in the earlier part of the text does offer an ideal for the Apostolic Missionary.

Rm 15:31:

But, I beg you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, to help me through the dangers by praying to God for me. Pray that I may escape the unbelievers in Judea, and that the aid I carry to Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints. Then, if God wills, I shall be feeling very happy when I come to enjoy a period of rest among you. May the God of peace be with you all.

Again there is some insight offered to us by the English translation. Paul was convinced that what he was bringing to Jerusalem was indeed worthwhile. All that is in the Stigmatine Founder's charism would encourage each of the Apostolic Missionaries to the thought that no matter how poor they make one think that the 'gift to Jerusalem' is, that in God's eyes, it is united to Jesus through consecration, and hence, is most worthwhile. Furthermore, there is the characteristic of the early Stigmatine community here, that of sincerely praying for the Mission of one another.

2 Co 10:5:

Our war is not fought with weapons of flesh, yet they are strong enough in God's cause, to demolish fortresses. We demolish sophistries and the arrogance that tries to refit the knowledge of God: every thought is our prisoner, captured to be brought into obedience to Christ...

The great struggle in the Apostolic Mission must be waged in hope. The ultimate reason for the confidence of the Stigmatine Founder was the Resurrected Christ. In his charism, the obedience to the Bishops, he thought of, in faith, as obedience of Jesus Christ to His Father, through the Holy Spirit.

Ph 2: 17, 20:

And then, if my blood has to be shed as part of your own sacrifice and offering - which is your faith - I shall be happy and rejoice with all of you, and you must be just as happy and rejoice with me... It was for Christ's work that [Epaphroditus] came so near to dying, and he risked his life to give me the help that you were not able to give yourselves...

The two-fold use of the term again offers us some insight into our service of Jesus Christ through the Bishops of the world. On the one hand, the ***obsequium episcoporum*** will always be a sacrifice, an offering, an oblation in faith, hope and love. In some senses, the attitude of faith does demand the 'surrender' of the intellect and will, the abandonment of one's entire self to God. It is toward this ideal that we are tending toward the ideal of the Stigmatine Founder.

Secondly, the **obsequium** does involve risk - for some it meant the gift of their lives, as in the example of Fr. Matthew Farinati, Fr. Cesare Dolzani, Fr. William Contino: these last two mentioned, IInd World War casualties - and the many Stigmatines who persevered through to the end in a monotonous, though, necessary, useful apostolic service.

Rm 12:1: this may offer us the most important text in this regard]:

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.

The 'body' here indicates the whole human person in relation to the world. Through the 'body', our whole existence, the 'world' we all are, offers to God a certain 'area' of each of us, individuals, unique personalities, made to the image and likeness of God. This holocaust that each one is invited to offer of himself, is unique. All 'sacrifices' in the Old Law came to be associated with the memorial of ancient Israel something that commemorated a past event, tried to improve a present, and instilled hope for the future. What happens in such an offering is that what was originally liturgical, turns into fervent eschatology. In sharp contrast with the bloody sacrifices of ancient times, this one is more closely united to the Eucharist. This is a living sacrifice, oft-repeated, and gradually becomes more and more identified with that one sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

What was at one time liturgical, in the formalized consideration of that - something reserved for special times and for the sacred confines of the Temple, this becomes extended to the monotony of the routine, of all of our human lives. This broadened idea of 'offertory', 'sacrifice' would replace any restricting mentality that would reserve prayer totally to the Temple. 'Worship' is now joined to life. There really cannot be any divorce between what is celebrated on the altar, and the life that is lived. It might be said more drastically that either the whole of our Stigmatine lives is worship, and that the assemblies we lead, the classes we teach, the sacramental acts we administer, the discourses we deliver, and all the various aspects of the Ministry of the Word of God that we offer - provide inspiration for an ever further response. Otherwise, there might be a real risk of allowing the apostolate to become more self-serving than a genuine oblation, offertory, **obsequium**. Liturgy alone cannot sustain the Apostolic Mission - even though the Mission certainly will forever need re-charging, nourishment and inspiration. It will be 'confronted' when the Apostolic Missionary truly listens to the word he serves.

Here, in St. Paul, the underlying idea is that the total offering of the Stigmatine life is also 'worship'. What is at stake here is the deeper meaning our Founder had of 'devotion' taken from St. Thomas:

... True devotion consists in the decisive will that is ready to give itself to God, and to be dedicated to those things which pertain to His service.¹⁰⁹

Veneration takes place 'unspiritually' unless there is conversion of heart, and, in our charism, one that inspires renewed apostolic zeal. Authentic worship will always mean agreement with God's Will, His praise in thought, will and action. Authentic praise of the Stigmatine will mean to accept the cure of each one's own sorrowful Stigmata - a truly Apostolic Missionary life is the response to the message of the Sacred Stigmata.

St. John reminds us:

God is spirit, and those who worship, must worship in spirit and in truth ... [cf. Jn 4:24]

Adoration of this kind is the Eucharistic Liturgy, which can never be considered as just a ceremony offered by a single celebrant. It becomes alive when all truly 'participate' in it by conversion, and by willingness to be distributed. Even ancient Israel was told:

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart, to sing the praises of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light [cf. Ex 19:6; cf. Rv 5].

...

2. The Stigmatine Life and the Eucharist:

In a certain sense, it may be said that the vocation of the entire Church - and hence, of all of us - is Eucharistic. The terminology of the Eucharist is used so often to describe our vocation in particular. One example of this may be found in the Decree of the Council on the Missions:

... Missionaries should fully understand that their life has also been consecrated to the service of the missions ... by means of the ministry of the missionaries - which deal principally with the Eucharist as the source of perfecting the Church, they are in communion with Christ, the Head, and are leading others to this communion ... [AG 39]

In PO, the Church teaches her priests that they in turn, are to instruct the faithful to offer to God the Father the divine victim in the sacrifice of the Mass, and to join to it the offering of their own lives. This is also in line with the thought of St.

¹⁰⁹ cf. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, p. 203.

Paul: 'Think of God's mercy, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings - by offering your loving bodies as a holy sacrifice truly leasing to God' [cf. Rm 12:1, f.].

With these principles in mind, we can very well compare our lives and our vocations to the Eucharist we are offering together. We may consider our lives a religious, as an offertory, a consecration, and a communion.

a. Offertory

In the sacrifice of the Mass, there is the Offertory of very ordinary gifts - and maybe, at times, gifts that we feel are not all that valuable. But, in the Eucharist, these gifts do not have extraordinary features about them - they are but the gifts of humble worshippers, wanting to share in the one divine sacrifice. By the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the offertory presents are changed profoundly in the consecration. They still look the same, and maybe even feel the same, and they do maintain more or less the same features and blemishes, but whatever their qualities or defects might have been - these are all elevated then to a higher level of existence and purpose. These consecrated gifts then manifest their basic purpose - that of bringing all of God's People together in a united communion.

These characteristics are a fairly good exemplification of our call from God. We all came some years ago to our Congregations, with our ordinary gifts. Maybe, in our own eyes, our gifts might not have been all that wonderful, or seemed very unimpressive - but, God's view of the world and of everyone in it has so often been different from our own. While we do believe, we beg for some share in God's vision of this world and of one another.

Throughout the pages of the OT, the Lord God of heaven and earth spoke of His choice of Israel, and of individuals in the nation. In the words of Isaiah we read:

... I, Yahweh, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you... [Is 42:6]

[You] are my servants whom I have chosen, that men may know and believe me and understand that it is I [cf. Is 43:10]..

From that biblical revelation on vocation, we learn that we are all very ordinary gifts, and that this was the story with his special servant revealed to us in II - Is. The Book of Dt also speaks on vocation in this light:

... If Yahweh has set his heart on you, and chosen you; it was not because you outnumbered other peoples: you were the least of all peoples. It was for love of you... [cf. Dt 7:7].

He is just asking us to believe this again this day. Our offertory gift is most precious in His eyes - because each of us is struggling to give back to Him all that we have and all that we are, or could be.

Another description of our offertory gift from the pages of Sacred Scripture is this familiar line:

... Do not be afraid - he tells us - for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you... Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched... Because you are precious in my eyes... and I love you ... [cf. Is 4:1, ff.]

b. Consecration

The lowly and insignificant gifts of ours are then consecrated. The Lord God told Jeremiah, and tells each of us:

... Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you: before you came to birth, I CONSECRATED you... [cf. Jr 1: 4, f].

No matter how lowly, or insignificant we may still feel, we are His, and He loves us . Much like a desert eagle - who saw Israel and everyone of us here - struggling in our own wilderness, He has picked us up; He has elevated us and He is directing us toward eternal communion with Himself.

There is no real consecration without some suffering - everything that was consecrated was then set aside for the worship of the Lord. Worship and sacrifice were so intimately associated in ancient times that they were almost confused. Sacrifice is an offering - recalled before our very eyes, in the separate consecration of the bread and wine, to show the separation of the body and the blood during the sacrifice on Calvary. Therefore all of our sufferings in some way enter into the concept of our offering: so, we read in the IIIrd Canticle of the Suffering Servant:

... The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied, he provides me with speech. [cf. Is 50:4]

In this sense, all suffering has an apostolic value - our entire consecration is a two-fold gift: for God, and for humanity.

Again, these Servant Hymns promise us in the words of God Himself:

... My servant will prosper... he shall be lifted up, and exalted to great heights... [cf. Is 52:13]

The lowly gifts are never the same again - consecration is much like a New Creation: The hand of God has reached down and elevated the lowly humanity with

us all, bringing it ever more close to His image and likeness. After consecrating us to His service, He invites us to make this perpetual and final - it is the Church that asks temporary profession. Before God, we are trying to give the best that we have.

The final result of consecration - when our offertory is complete, and our sacrifice is truly total - we will be generally liberated from all slavery. We have been called to a service of worship, devotion and continuing dedication - and are being asked to make this last as long as our lives do.

c. **Communion**

Lastly, our Eucharistic vocation of Hope leads us of its nature to Communion. Our consecrated offertory gifts are meant to serve from now on, in a very special manner, to construct, to build a community: we are meant to 'edify' the People of God, from the experience we all derive of God from our daily struggles. One of the greatest of all of God's servants is the unknown figure in the Book of Consolation of Isaiah. This Servant is told - and these words are being likewise addressed to all of us:

... You are My Servant... in whom I shall be glorified.. It is not enough for you to be My servant ..." [cf. Is 49:6].

He is preparing us for the final revelation of Jn 15, where the Servant is truly a friend. Ours is a ministry and a mission of consolation and hope, first to one another, and then to all of God's People.

...

Conclusion

The Eucharist is a Sacrament of Hope and it is the story of our vocation told in symbolic sacramental manner. If we can believe that, can we not at the celebration of the Eucharist - each one of us - begin anew at this "New and Everlasting Covenant", begin all over again?

Can we not make a new offertory procession of the past? Can we believe once more that God truly loves us all, that He will accept our poor offertory gifts? Cannot God Himself consecrate all of the past - remove all the blemishes - and renew all our good points? Cannot this be our offertory - that will be consecrated - elevated from its defects - so that each one of us might be a Sacrament of Hope and Perseverance for whatever it is that might lie ahead of us?

We can ask ourselves this question addressed to another assembly a long time ago:

... And now, Israel, what does Yahweh ask of you? Only this: to fear Yahweh, your God - to follow all His ways, to love Him, to serve Yahweh, your God with ALL your heart, with ALL your soul, and to keep the commandments and laws of Yahweh that for your good I lay down for you TODAY? [cf. Dt 10:12].

The prophet Micah has said it even more simply:

... This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God [cf. Mi 6:8].

• • •

3. Obsequium according to St. Ignatius

In the ideal of St. Ignatius, codified in his Constitutions, there is evident a 'mysticism of service'. The Founder of the Jesuits originally wrote the Constitutions in Spanish, and there were eventually translated into Latin by his secretary, Polanco. For the many, many times that Ignatius used the Spanish words *servir* / *servicio* the translation into Latin used a variety of terms, such as *auxilium* / *auxiliari*, *obsequium* / *obsequi*. If one were to read the Latin text of Part VII, concerning the Missions of the Roman Pontiff, repeatedly the Latin expressions: *missio, missiones, in obsequium* recur so familiar also in the Stigmatine Founder's writings.

The following are a few examples taken from the Rule of St. Ignatius:

... The Jesuit may be able to proceed with greater spiritual energies toward greater service and glory of the Divine Majesty [*ad maius obsequium*].¹¹⁰

... Such spiritual coadjutors should also be asked whether, as something characteristic of their vocation, they will be content and at peace, to serve their Creator and Lord in low and humble offices and ministries whatever kind they may be, for the benefit of the house and the Society; and whether they will be ready to spend all the days of their lives in those occupations believing that in this they are serving and praising their Creator and Lord, by doing all things for His divine love and reverence.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ cf. Constitution SJ # 51

¹¹¹ cf. Constitution SJ # 118.

The Jesuit Constitutions in which *obsequium* is found are very numerous.¹¹²

However, it is particularly in Part VII of the Jesuit Rule that is of interest to us - especially in the light of the fact that some understand the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission in this light shed by St. Ignatius, with certain adaptations. St. Ignatius' idea of "Apostolic Mission" is an *obsequium*, offered to God, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, to the Church, to the Roman Pontiff, to the Jesuit Superiors. The following are a few examples taken from that Part VII:

... The [Jesuits] may be sent in some places or others by the Supreme Vicar of Christ, our Lord, or by the superiors of the Society, who for them are similarly in the place of His Divine Majesty; or, they themselves may choose where and in what work they will labor, when they have been commissioned to travel to any place they judge that the greater service of God [*maius Dei et Domini nostri obsequium*] and the good of souls will follow;... where much fruit of glory and service of God is expected [*ubi magnus divinae gloriae et obsequii*].¹¹³

... [some places are] not conducive to the common good of the Society and the greater service of God [*et maius obsequium Dei..*].¹¹⁴

... the Jesuit is to be sent in the manner that His Holiness judges to be a greater service of God and of the Apostolic See [*ad maius Dei et Sedis Apostolicae fore*].¹¹⁵

... The Supreme Pontiff may leave it to the superior to judge who would be fit for such a mission; the superior, while pondering the greater universal good ... undertaken in the service of God... [*ad Dei obsequium suscepta...*].¹¹⁶

... The Superior will try to help [the Jesuit] by what further counsels he can, that in everything God our Lord and the Apostolic See may be better served...¹¹⁷

¹¹² What follows here is a partial listing from the Jesuit Constitutions: ## 4; 8; 13; 49; 51; 59; 82; 114; 118; 119; 134; 149; 161; 162; 176; 192; 194; 204; 205; 208; 212; 213; 214; etc.

¹¹³ Constitution SJ # 603.

¹¹⁴ cf. ib. # 608.

¹¹⁵ cf. ib. # 609.

¹¹⁶ cf. ib. # 611.

¹¹⁷ cf. ib. # 612.

... The Superior can also be helpful by some instruction, not only in his own Missions, but also in those of His Holiness, in order to attain better the end which is sought in the service of Christ our Lord [*quod ad Christi Domini nostri obsequium quaeritur...*]¹¹⁸.

...

There is some small difficulty in the Jesuit structure for those not familiar with St. Ignatius' great gift from God - the Society has two vows of obedience! These are the third and also fourth vows. However, on a closer approach to this Missionary charism, one sees that while it is true that all religious by virtue of the vows of Religion, are subject to the Holy Father in a special way - the Fourth Vow of the Jesuits has as its 'matter' the Apostolic Missions to be assigned by the Holy Father himself. This would include all the spiritual ministries of the Society without exception, which are in conformity with the end, or purpose of the Company, as spelled out in the **Formula** and in the remainder of the Constitutions which explain this. This **Formula** is made up of Papal constitutions approving the Company of Jesus.

For the Stigmatines the **Compendium Rude**, the fundamental paragraphs that introduce the Original Constitutions, serve as a kind of **Formula**. Then the rest of the Constitutions serve to spell these paragraphs out in more detail.

...

4. In the Writings of St. Gaspar Bertoni

In his description of the stigmatine charism, the Stigmatine Founder very often uses the word **obsequium**, as has been noted. He uses this word in relation to God, to Christ, the Eucharistic **obsequium**, toward the Word of God, Mary, the Church and authority. The following are a few examples of this:

a. Toward God

... It is easy to estimate how deep is your love, how great your hunger for the Divine Word, the fervor of your wanting to serve [*ossequio divino*] God - when you must meet head on the very strong attractions of this world.¹¹⁹

... Put before your mind's eye a King, divinely chosen, to whom all the Christian leaders and people owe reverence and service [*ossequio*]¹²⁰...

¹¹⁸ cf. ib. # 614.

¹¹⁹ St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Pagine di Vita Cristiana* [PVC], Sermon 16, p. 262.

¹²⁰ St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Retreat to Priests and Seminarians: The Reign of Christ - CS I*, p. 167.

... The third grouping of individuals would be those ready to surrender even the most sincere affection, and equally disposed to retain or give up something - depending on what would be the more convenient for the divine service [*ossequio*].¹²¹

In this divine *ossequio*, Fr. Bertoni found apt expression for his "Holy Abandonment" - he would at times, quote the words of St. Paul on the way to Damascus: Lord, what do YOU want me to do? [cf. Ac 9:6].¹²²

The word *ossequio* is noted throughout in the Stigmatine Founder's meditation on faith, as did St. Thomas Aquinas in his theological explanations of Faith:

... To believe is an obeisance [*ossequio*] that the intelligent creature offers to its Creator: an obeisance [*ossequio*] that is not stupid, not thoughtless, but one that is most reasonable ... Faith is indeed glorious for the ones whose reason is the most beautiful aspect of nature. This is the oblation that St. Paul speaks of: *rationabile obsequium vestrum* [cf. Rm 2:1]. By believing, one makes a servant of his intellect in regards to the Faith [cf. 2 Co 1:5], but this 'slavery' does not proceed from weakness nor from ignorance. St. John Chrysostom says that such a surrender is a characteristic of one who is indeed generous, and of truly philosophical bent of mind, one that is truly sublime and above the ordinary mentality...¹²³

For students of theology and Vatican II, this *obsequium of the intellect and will*, this 'surrender' is one of the expressions of Vatican I, to describe the workings of grace within an individual accepting the faith. The act of faith is an 'obedience', an obeisance, an 'abandonment' of one's entire self to God [cf. DV 5].

... to readily follow the impulse of the Holy Spirit; to offer from this moment on your hearts to Jesus Who is asking them of you; to make the firm resolution to serve from now on, for the rest of the days of your life, that God Who merits so much your best service [*ossequio*].¹²⁴

... It should be said that those who would like to dedicate themselves entirely to the service [*ossequio*] of God, should not only make the offer to accept the fatigue to do so. Their offering should rather be one of ever greater undertakings and activities... Here one sees at least the

¹²¹ cf. id., Mss B # 2538.

¹²² cf. Nello, p. 154.

¹²³ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, MSS B 1555.

¹²⁴ cf. OVC, p. 205 - Sermon II, On Devotion.

rough outlines of what went on in Christ and in His Apostles; and right now there is more need than ever for something like this...¹²⁵

b. Toward Jesus Christ

Fr. Bertoni presents the Sorrowful Wounds of Jesus Christ as an incentive for his listeners to offer their ***obsequium*** to Him:

... This is how the Just Man dies, in a most torturous manner, condemned by the most unjust sentence after a most terrible betrayal. This is how the sufferings of Jesus came to an end. However, His enemies even wound His dead body. They open with a lance His right side with a gaping wound which pierces His heart and His other wise... Would that we could have received that dead and bloody body to make up for this most atrocious wrong, with the just offering [***ossequio***] of tears...¹²⁶

... St. Ignatius suggests: poverty, disdain for oneself, humility. the chosen must first achieve a spiritual affection for poverty [cf. Ignatius, 46]. : 'Blessed are the Poor in spirit' [cf. Mt 5:3]. Moreover, if the reason of the divine service [***ossequio***] and election are understood, this will lead one to follow after Him with the same poverty [cf. Ignatius, 146]: 'If you wish to be perfect, go sell what you have, give it to the poor, and come follow Me!'¹²⁷

c. Toward the Spirit of Love

All of this forms "a Law of the Spirit" and of love - which Law essentially consists in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, this requires that to the internal affections and motions of the heart, there is to be added the external service [***ossequio***] of the tongue and the even more solemn deeds of the hand.

d. Toward the Most Blessed Sacrament

St. Mechtilde attests that the Son of God appeared to her once and ordered her to venerate in every way possible by obeisance [***ossequio***] toward the divine sacrament, His most sacred Heart - and that there was nowhere any book which could contain all the favors that derive from this devotion ... similar sentiments of obeisance [***ossequio***] we red shaving been lived by saints Bernard, Bonaventure,

¹²⁵ cf. Nello, II, p. 144

¹²⁶ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Sermon 4 - The Passion, in: PVX p. 186.

¹²⁷ id, "The Standard of Christ", in: CS I, p. 191.

Brigid, Frances of Rome, Francis de sales and by many, many other individual favored by God.¹²⁸

e. Toward the Divine Word

... One walks worthily of this vocation, submitting our intellect with humble obeisance [*ossequio*] to believe the divine Word:

- with all humility: by not resisting with obstinate contradiction the authoritative judgments of the legitimate shepherds who have a right from God Himself to propose this to us and to explain its true meaning.

- with 'meekness': overcoming with unshakable patience the calumnies, the ridicule, the opposition that came to us from the enemies of the faith and of the peace of the Church.

- 'patience': and assisting us with mutual love to walk, carrying the burdens of one another. In this way, we all walk together in the same vocation, supporting one another in charity. Be solicitous to maintain the unity of spirit. By the grace of God, this unity of spirit, or of the faith, we do possess: what we must do is conserve it, keep it...¹²⁹

f. Toward Mary

... It seems to me that Mary herself wishes to bring together on this special day, such a most pleasing service [*ossequio*].¹³⁰

... O venerable Name of Mary! With what profound obeisance [*ossequio*] should not this Name be pronounced by us from now on. Wretched sinners that we are, with how much confidence can we not invoke this Name! Since she does have such authority of dominion over the person of her Son - then how can she not be the Mistress of all His wealth, of that immense sea of grace and mercies?

g. Toward the Church

It is here that the Stigmatic charism is distinguished - in dedicated availability to the Church, through her Bishops. This was Fr. Bertoni's way of following after/

¹²⁸ cf. Nello II, p. 185; Mss B 1760.

¹²⁹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Sermon 35, in: PVC ,pp. 259, ff.

¹³⁰ cf. id., PVC p. 302.

imitating/ putting on the mind of Jesus Christ, in His personal relationship of loving obedience to His Father, and total self-giving to His Spouse, the Church:

... It is necessary, therefore, to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ Who once emanated the Commandments of the Decalogue, and Who in our time, instructs and governs the hierarchical Church [Ignatius, Rule 13, *Sentire cum Ecclesia*]¹³¹...

At one period of his life, Fr. Bertoni was assigned by his Bishops to assist a number of priests trying to make their way back, through conversion, to the full living of their vocations... Among his sermons of those times, the following passage may be found:

... **Jesus of Nazareth went down to Nazareth and 'He was subject to them'. The life of obedience is clearly the way to perfection... How much disobedience is there not found among priests! Disobedience to Pastors, to Spiritual Directors, if indeed they have any - to the Bishops, to the Pope, to the Church - in whose place they put themselves, and re-interpret their orders, and prove to be so upsetting... Their 'freedom' is their withdrawal from obeying Christ, Who so humbly commands through the mouth of His Vicar on earth, and those superiors united to His Vicar in faith and charity; while they throw off a yoke that is sweet, light, gentle and glorious - they seek one that is much more harsh, heavy, inexorable, shameful ...**¹³²

Fr. Bertoni was disposed to undertake **any Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever**, always trusting in the voice of his ecclesiastical superior. As a diocesan priest, he certainly recognized in this voice the voice of God.¹³³

For Fr. Bertoni, **obedience, or the assistance, service of Bishops**, was but the logical conclusion of his fundamental spiritual principle of holy abandonment:

... **You should not precede, but only follow the Lord**, Who illumines your path, and will suggest to you which way to follow, once you have asked Him, and in what manner you should proceed and correspond¹³⁴.

...

¹³¹ Quoted by Fr. Bertoni in his Retreat to Priests and Seminarians, in: CS I, p. 244.

¹³² cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Retreat to Priests: "The Private Life of Jesus", in: CS I, p. 182.

¹³³ This is the testimony of Fr. Cajetan Borsatti, Prison Chaplain - cf. *Summarium Additionale*, pp; 119, ff.; Nello, II, p. 499.

¹³⁴ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Memoriale Privato* [MP], January 12, 1811.

5. Episcoporum

There are three points that can be considered here:

- a. The Legitimate Interpreters of the Word of God, are the interpreters of the Stigmatine Apostolate.
- b. The Priesthood in Fr. Bertoni's Plan.
- c. The Expression: "More than others" in the Stigmatine Service of Bishops.

a. The Bishops: The Legitimate Interpreters of the Word of God - the Legitimate Interpreters of the Stigmatine Charism:

Being a Diocesan Priest, and a confidant of a series of Bishops of Verona, who had Church renewal high on their list of priorities, Fr. Bertoni made this great sense of fidelity to the "Local Church" an essential and determining part of his charism. The Bishops, he deeply believed, were appointed by the same Holy Spirit Who inspired the Scriptures. As they are the legitimate interpreters of God's Word, for Fr. Bertoni, they are also the interpreters of the way the Stigmatine would serve the Church, **through the various and proper ministries** of the Stigmatine vocation, as envisaged in the Original Constitutions¹³⁵ - based almost entirely on *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, by Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ. In a way, the 'epiphany' of God's Will for him was the Bishop's Apostolic needs.

1.] Fr. Bertoni looked on the apostolate clearly through the eyes of his faith:

... Obedience to the Church in her Prelates ... that which the Church proposes is not based on human judgment alone, but on the divine...¹³⁶

a.] For Fr. Bertoni, the Magisterium is a God-given instrument to offer powerful assistance in interpreting the divine will:

... Through the Magisterium of the Church, 'the divine will of sign' becomes manifest, in what concerns the reprobation, or destruction of what is merely human interpretation - and also in what pertains to the renewal and restoration of the divine spirit in her ministers...¹³⁷

¹³⁵ cf. CF # 185.

¹³⁶ St. Gaspar Bertoni, Mss B # 4998; cf. also Nello, II, p. 191

¹³⁷ cf. id., Mss B; Nello II, p. 223.

b.] In the Ecclesiology of the times, he saw the great need for One Church - as in our own time, there is the problem of "Parallel Magisterial", rejected by Pope John Paul II at Puebla, and many times since. In Fr. Bertoni's time, with its political and doctrinal situation, he saw the ideal of a united Church:

... Whoever makes two Churches, i.e., whoever would set up a party that would think differently from the Roman Church, is outside the true Church...¹³⁸

2.] With great faith in the Magisterium, he did not think that those called to serve in that way had any other reason for being. He saw the great need for prayer in the members of the hierarchy, being entrusted with "the sure charism of truth" [cf. DV 8]:

... A Pastor must be a man of prayer. Such a person encounters reality in the way the Providence of God has decreed it. The man of prayer, therefore, is not precipitous, impulsive: he sees all as ordered, tranquil. He awaits the right moment, and for the proper combinations of circumstances. To have the proper lights that give confidence, confirmation, that reach to the right understanding concerning the choices that are in accord with God, deep prayer is necessary in Prelates...¹³⁹

a.] His synthesis of the Apostolic Mission is summarized as a **service of the Church of the Vicar of Christ - through the Bishops.** He once prayed:

... 'take command, God, as befits your power, that power, God, you have wielded in our behalf' [cf. Ps 69:29] - so that we, through the Catholic Bishops, might share in the firmness of that one High Priest and source of all jurisdiction in your Church.¹⁴⁰

Behind these words there is some indication that Fr. Bertoni may have held as his own theological opinion, one that was at variance with his own, Bishop Liruti. The Bishop had written in a public document [dated: February 11, 1811] that every Bishop receives his jurisdiction directly from God. For Fr. Bertoni, the jurisdiction came to Bishops through the mediation of the Pope.¹⁴¹ Hence, his real intention was the full service of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, but always through the Bishops.

¹³⁸ cf. id., Mss B. # 6040; cf. also Nello, p. 257.

¹³⁹ cf. Mss. B, # 6192 - cf. also Nello, II, p. 285.

¹⁴⁰ cf. Mss B 6282.

¹⁴¹ cf. Nello, II, p. 287, Note # 109.

b.] In his spirituality, the Stigmatine Founder looked on obedience as one of the surest signs of the presence of the Spirit, a basic Ignatian principle:

... The sign which confirms all the others is the presence of the Holy Spirit - with Whom one receives the grace of the Word, the affection and effectiveness, together with charity and the love of the Word. A sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the excelling humility - the sign of excellent humility is perfect obedience, which is the sign of signs, i.e., the seal of all other testimonies...¹⁴²

Here we are close to the kernel of Fr. Bertoni's spirituality: he simply rejects any claim to the authentic presence of the Spirit where there is not first the evidence of humble submission to authority. One cannot pretend to be docile to God if he is not first docile to his ecclesial superiors.¹⁴³

c.] In the terrible struggle to share the message of Jesus Christ, Fr. Bertoni commented on a passage from Job:

... 'Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service , his time no better than hired drudgery' [cf. Jb 7:1]. Each one of the faithful is like a soldier in the struggle, and the Pastor is like a Captain...¹⁴⁴

d.] The lack of obedience, dedicated, united service - eventually leads to division:

... Anyone who is called to be a Shepherd in relation to his own flock is in his turn, a Lamb in relation to the Supreme Shepherd. Such Shepherds are called to live among their sheep, as sheep themselves of the First Shepherd, who is 'the Servant of the Servants of God' towards the faithful. Sane doctrine, which is in accord with that of the First Shepherd, removes vice: 'Where two or three are gathered in my Name, there I am in the midst of them' [cf. Mt 18:20]. Otherwise, the result would be schism, which defeats the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁵

3.] Fr. Bertoni nurtured a profound respect for Bishops throughout his entire life:

... however, since I already knew from other sources that the Bishop intended me to obey him alone in this, I did not act upon other orders. I

¹⁴² cf. Mss B # 6441.

¹⁴³ cf. Nello II, p. 289.

¹⁴⁴ cf. Mss B # 6534; cf. also Nello, II, p. 339.

¹⁴⁵ cf. Mss B # 6660; cf. also Nello II, p. 343

did want to write to you about all this, but had to wait for further clarification from the Bishop...¹⁴⁶

• • •

b. The Priesthood and the Apostolic Mission in Fr. Bertoni's Plan

1.] It is true that the IInd Vatican Council has abolished every form of 'class' in the religious life - and it is also true that Pope Paul VI's Encyclical, ***Evangelii Nuntiandi***, has broadened our idea of 'evangelization.' Nonetheless, there are still some aspects of the Ministry of the Word requiring sacramental orders. Some of these apostolates would be the Eucharistic Homily and Sacramental Reconciliation.

a.] In the time of the Stigmatine Founder, almost every middle class home had its 'servants', as did every wealthy family. This idea of 'class' in societies in which the monarchical system of government was still a vivid memory, all this had a profound influence on religious life.

b.] It is also most true that individuals are eminently products of their times. This is particularly so of the Stigmatine Founder, who might indeed be contrasted with the original thinker, his contemporary, Fr. Anthony Rosmini. There is no doubt that Fr. Bertoni, perhaps somewhat timid, reflective by nature, was surely a creature of his own history.

c.] However, it does not seem that the Stigmatine Founder's insistence on the specific role of the priesthood was solely from the aspect of a society steeped in the 'class' system. It seems, rather that the importance of the priesthood in the Original Constitutions derived from its central idea, the **Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance of Bishops**.

d.] In that part of the rule where the Founder begins to 'spell out' the specifics of the Apostolic Mission, we find the following:

... [The members who would take the Fourth Vow will be characterized as follows:

- by the taking on of the clerical state, and being endowed with every disposition that they might do this with perfection;¹⁴⁷

- they will be assigned to the administration of the Sacraments, especially that of Penance and the Eucharist, along with the celebration

¹⁴⁶ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Ep, pp. 28, ff.; cf. also Nello II, p. 427.

¹⁴⁷ cf. CF # 161; cf. also # 49.

of Holy Mass to obtain the fruit of the Missions, of the preaching, and of the confessions.¹⁴⁸

2.] As is well known, the Stigmatine Founder spoke of this characteristic:

... Fr. Galvani, who is said to be totally Ignatian, has offered me the Stimate as an opportune place to establish a Congregation of priests who would live under the Rules of St. Ignatius.¹⁴⁹

Most Holy Father... the least of Your servants, the under-signed - priest, with a few of his companions, living the priestly and common life, for 22 years have served the Spouse of Christ gratuitously. We do this to honor in this Spouse the common Creator and Savior of us all... And this is my own firm decision, as well as that of my companions: to spend ourselves totally in serving Our Lord and His Church, if He thinks us worthy to do so...¹⁵⁰

3.] While the Society of Jesus was being assembled in its General Congregation to discuss this problem of the abolition of classes, striving to remain faithful at one and the same time to their fundamental charism, as well as to Vatican II, they received this Letter from Pope Paul VI, dated December 3, 1974 [Feast of St. Francis Borgia]. In part the Pope's Letter reads:

... Where do you come from. Who are you? Where are you going?... We speak to you in the name of Christ and - as you like to consider us - as the highest Superior of the Society, by reason of the special bond which from the time of its foundation, always links the Society itself to the Roman Pontiff.

We know, therefore, who you are... you are members of a religious, apostolic, priestly order, united by a special bond with the Roman Pontiff, a bond of love, and of service, in the manner described in the Formula of the Institute...

... You are religious ... You are, furthermore, apostles, i.e., missionaries ... and the very diversity of ministries to which the Society is dedicated, draws from such sources its most profound reason for that apostolic life, which always must be lived in the 'full sense.'....

Then, you are also priests: this, too, is an essential characteristic of the Company, while not forgetting the ancient and legitimate tradition of the

¹⁴⁸ cf. CF # 162.

¹⁴⁹ cf. Letter 54, in: Ep p. 130.

¹⁵⁰ St. Gaspar Bertoni, Letter to Pope Gregory XVI, in: Ep p. 340.

excellent Brothers. Even though not endowed with sacred orders, they, too, have played an honored and effective role in the Company.

... However, the priesthood was formally required by the Founder for the Religious elevated to the 'Professed.' There is good reason for this - because the priesthood is necessary for the Order established by him, which has for its principal purpose the sanctification of human beings through the Word and sacraments...

... Effectively, the priestly character is required by your dedication to the apostolic life, we repeated, understood in the 'full sense': by the very charisma of the Priestly Order, which configures one to Christ, sent by the Father. Then the Mission, to which as Jesuits, you are deputed, flows principally from this.

You are therefore, priests... who administer the grace of God with the sacraments, priests who receive the power, and have the duty to participate organically in the apostolic work of nourishment and of union of the Christian community, especially with the celebration of the Eucharist...

... Finally, you are united to the Pope by a special vow...

...

4.] In the plan of the Stigmatine Founder, the **Apostolic Missionaries** are born **for the assistance of Bishops** - collaborators in the Mission of the Apostles. The hierarchical authority, as it is presently exercised, served for the Stigmatine Founder as the sacramentality, the 'epiphany', of the power of Christ, the Lord. In this power, and by means of this power, Jesus Himself gathers, sanctifies and governs His own in the Gift of the Word and of His Holy Spirit. The Shepherds of the Church in history have been placed in their authority, also by the grace of the Holy Orders received. This gives them a share in the power enabling them to act in a particular manner, in the Name of Christ, the Head. The Sacrament gives to Bishops the spiritual power over the Body of Christ, the Church, the People of God. By divine institution the sacrament of Orders is the formal determining principle of the hierarchical communion of the Church. This sharing in the power of Christ enables the Bishops to act in the Name of Christ over the Body of Christ: both the People of God and the Eucharist.

a.] In the Stigmatine Founder's ideal, the members submit humbly in their vocation to this hierarchical authority, thus offering also to the Church a witness of the submission of Jesus to His heavenly Father. Furthermore, in the words of the Founder himself [cf. CF # 2], the Stigmatine receives from the hierarchy the power to continue the personal mission of Christ to gather, to sanctify and to lead the People of God to the Father.

b.] The Stigmatines do not make a special vow of obedience to the Bishops because it is simply juridically impossible, if they are to remain 'religious' and not Diocesan Oblates. However, the Stigmatine is called in his 'difficult vocation' to offer a dedicated obedience', one that is determined in a totally special manner, one that is outstanding in its service to the Bishops - this is Fr. Bertoni's own phrase. This covers all that pertains to the apostolic Mission. The *obsequium*¹⁵¹ of the Stigmatine has as its object that which concerns the **Apostolic Mission**.

c.] The Church herself is the 'formal Founder' of the Congregation - the originality of the Stigmatine community resides in the **total abandonment** to God, exteriorally expressed through **availability** to the Bishops of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. The Stigmatine Congregation was born to fulfill the **Apostolic Mission** for the assistance of Bishops. In the original vision of the Founder, there is the configuration to Jesus, sent by the Father for the redemption of the world, through the suffering of His Sacred Stigmata. This is why Jesus 'offers' Himself [cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16. and is 'consecrated' by the Father [cf. Jn 10:14, 18; 17:19], and is 'distributed', as the High priest, Servant of the Father - self-sacrificing Spouse of the Church [cf. Ep 5: 21, ff.]

d.] The universal character of the **Apostolic Mission** is expressed in geographical terms [*quocumque*] - in terms of personnel, involving every single Stigmatine [*quicumque*] - and is expressed in pastoral terms, by the vocation to be prepared as a body to assume any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever [*quodcumque*]. It is a share in the **Apostolic Mission** - the one Jesus received from His Father, and shared with His Apostles, which implies gratuity as an ideal. It is firmly radicated in the Eucharist and in the sacramental life of the Church. For the basically 'sacramental' purpose of the mission, the Stigmatine Founder saw his community as 'sacerdotal.'

e.] Very often, the term 'clerical' in this context, has proven to assume a pejorative meaning. However, the original purpose of the Stigmatine Founder is often clouded in the heated and justified discussions that do ensue regarding his charism - however, 'clericality' should not be discussed from within the Congregation and its own history - but, far more by looking at the **Apostolic Mission** in St. Gaspar Bertoni's ideal.

f.] In the Stigmatine ideal, there is a plurality of ministries, and a variety of members - but, all united, as the Most Holy Trinity, in the Plan of Creation, Redemption and sanctification. The Stigmatine Founder's repeated insistence on the priestly ministry seems to have been inspired by his idea of

¹⁵¹ cf. also Constitutions SJ, # 527.

Apostolic Mission. Collaboration in the Mission of Evangelization committed to the Church by her Founder, and a share in the very Mission of Jesus Christ: this pertains to all the baptized, consecrated as each one is in Jesus Christ, into His death and resurrection [cf. Rm 6:1, ff.]

g.] However, to promise a full obedience to Bishops for the Mission of the Church also means to be dedicated to **the various and proper ministries** of the Congregation, in behalf of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. The principal ministries, as these are presented by the Founder, are sacramental.

5.] In the process of discernment for the acceptance of apostolates, it would seem in the light of these reflections that the **various and proper ministries** can only be accepted if in some way they further the central apostolates that have emerged in the history of the Congregation: specialized preaching, the assistance of priests, religious and seminarians - and the apostolate to the youth, in its various aspects.

a.] The competent service of the Divine Word demands grace, and great personal commitment to it. The Stigmatine **Apostolic Mission** calls for a life- long spiritual growth, an on-going intellectual development.

b.] Any meditation on the Stigmatine **Apostolic Mission** would show that the **various and proper ministries** of this vocation, means a committed service offered to the Eternal father, through the Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ, Priest-Servant and Spouse, in obedience to the Bishops of the Church.

c.] All the members of the Stigmatine Congregation, without exception, are dedicated to the same Mission of Jesus Christ, in differing ways - all Stigmatines are consecrated to God to serve the one Apostolic Mission of the universal Church, that of leading humanity to the Most Blessed Trinity, through holiness and apostolic competence.

...

c. "More than others"

The XXIXth General Chapter of 1970, the Extra-ordinary General Chapter called for the renewal of the Constitutions [and also to elect a successor to the Very Rev. Gilbert Fini, CSS, who died in office in the 4th year of his second term as Superior General] decided on the following for the second 'Fundamental Constitution':

... The Congregation is for the assistance of bishops more than the other institutes, because of a more acute missionary sensibility to the needs of dioceses...

The subsequent General Chapter in 1976, thought better of this reading, and among its "Guidelines for the Pre-Capitular Commission" [n. 11], there was this following directive:

... Constitution 2: Keep the content, but take out the competitive spirit, which seems to be behind the expression *more than others*.

This same difficulty had been confronted a number of times in the history of the Society of Jesus. The Company of Jesus is called to the "greater" service of the Roman Pontiff. The Jesuit theologian, Francis Suarez, discussed this matter specifically several centuries ago,¹⁵² and offered this consideration:

... 14. In obedience to the Roman Pontiff the Society does enjoy something proper ... In the early institution of this community, this is evident in the words of the Pontiffs who approved it... In no other religious communities is there found this proposal, and one that is repeated so many times. Obedience to the Pope is the primary scope of this community.

... This may be clarified further. No other religious institute consecrates itself to this means of a special vow. The Society of Jesus does this by a special vow, by which is Professed oblige themselves to obey the Pontiff in the Missions for the salvation of humanity, and the defense or spread of the faith.

This does not mean that all the religious of the Society take this vow - they who do profess it, comprise the principal part of the Society; the work they do responds to the principal purpose for which the Society was founded...

...

1.] A Bit of History

a.] In the initial discussions concerning their Constitutions, the Companions of Ignatius, under his leadership, discussed the particular obedience of the Jesuits concerning their Apostolic Mission toward the Roman Pontiff. This difficulty of serving the Pope 'the more' [cf. *ad maiorem Dei Gloriam*] surfaced. The question was resolved as it came up. They say very clearly that all the members of the Church, incorporated into Christ through Baptism, owe obedience to the Pope. However the phrases used to resolve the dilemma are found in the Formula which prefaces the Jesuit Constitutions:

... For the *greater* devotion to the obedience to the Apostolic See, for a *greater* abnegation of our wills, and for a sure direction of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵² Fr. Francis Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, Lib. I, c. II, n. 14. Paris: Vives 1860, pp. 567 a - 567 b.

In the spirituality of the Stigmatine Founder, there is a parallel ideal: in the reverential acceptance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, there is the profession of faith that the Holy Spirit will guide the Congregation more surely by means of the bishops.¹⁵³

b.] St. Bonaventure offers this reason for a second, special vow for the Franciscans: even if all the clergy, and all religious are firmly held to obey, there can still be a special obedience, in so far as from such an act of faith, consecrated, then, but faithful service there would be received a particular grace and merit.¹⁵⁴

2.] The Spiritual Exercises preached by the Stigmatine Founder [taken from those of St. Ignatius] require a submission to the Church by all the faithful - however, the specific 'Stigmatine' submission is found in the community' **availability to the Bishops**, concerning the **Apostolic Mission**. this is meant to emulate the **abandonment of Jesus to His Heavenly Father**. It is in the 'spirit' of the Original Constitutions not to have the 'ordinary' care of parishes, chaplaincies of Convents, in the canonical structures that were in vogue at that time. The juridical climate is much changed now, and so often parishes are mission centers for a very varied apostolate - and chaplaincies often have associated with them professorships, or other missionary endeavors. The Stigmatine spirit was one of 'mobility', **availability** - the willingness to move on. Stigmatine obedience, in the ideal, implies the **more than ordinary** - its 'specificity' is found in the fact that service of the Church, unavailability to its Bishops, strives to live out an aspect of the life of Christ, namely His relationship within the Trinity. The **Apostolic Mission** of the Stigmatine is meant to be a competent effort at evangelization and sanctification.

3.] Surely, in the light of the IInd Vatican Council [cf. LG 22], recent documents¹⁵⁵ - there is little doubt that every ecclesiastical mission flow from the source of divine love.¹⁵⁶ In the light of this love, all the faithful are called to obey the Church - and the recent Magisterium will say 'especially priests and religious.' Nevertheless, even with these enjoinders, Stigmatine submission retains its particular, special character. Stigmatine obedience is directed primarily toward the **Apostolic Mission**, offered for the Assistance of **Bishops**. Stigmatine '**service**' [**obsequium**] places an entire Congregation at the service of Bishops, with a promised competence and particular dedication, the on-going preparation of its members, for

¹⁵³ cf. a Discussion on this point, in: *La Formula dell'Istitutio SJ. REcherches* 12. Rome: CIS 1977, pp. 75, ff.

¹⁵⁴ cf. *Insuper Promitto. Los votos solemnes peculiares del nos Ordenes*. J.G. Habits. Roma: CSJ 1963, p. 105.

¹⁵⁵ cf. *Mutuae Relationes*. Pentecost 1978, n. 4: The Bishops and Religious intent on the one Mission of the People of God].

¹⁵⁶ cf. AG 2; cf. also *Enchiridion Vaticanum* VI, pp. 432-509.

any form of the Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever, especially: preaching, the assistance of priests, seminarians and religious - and youth work. Without any sense of triumphalism, the Stigmatine vocation is invited to offer witness to ecclesial obedience.

4.] This Apostolic Mission for the assistance of Bishops will always remain deeply a part of the Church - by the very injunction of seeking the faculties from the local Ordinaries, or remaining faithfully within the scope of the permissions received - all of these prescriptions offer some insight into the mind of the Founder. The place of the Stigmatine community in the Church is based on the relationship of Jesus to His Father, and the resulting free and personal choice of each Stigmatine to act solely in the name of the Church, under obedience to the Bishops. While all that pertains to the interior religious life is in some way 'exempt' from the local Ordinaries, the **Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops** offers a variety and proper ecclesial service entrusted to the Congregation in the strength of its vocation, in the name of the Church.

5.] The hierarchical constitution of the Church is more expressly based on the sacramental economy, and notably on the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Orders. The tie between the apostolic obedience of the Stigmatine to the Bishops is based on the authority of the Bishops chosen by the Holy Spirit. Stigmatine obedience, particularly now in the light of ***Evangelii Nuntiandi***, which speaks of the 'first apostolate' of religious being 'witness' - can offer a 'catechesis', a lived expression of these truths.

Conclusion

The Stigmatine spirit in this regard was expressed well over a century ago by Fr. Lenotti, to the Stigmatine Novices of another time.

...It may be seen clearly what the intention of Fr. Bertoni really was - that of instituting a Congregation, which - like the Company of Jesus - in a special manner is dedicated, directed to the service [***ossequio***] and to the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff; then, this Congregation would be dedicated and determined in a totally special and outstanding manner to the service and obeisance [***ossequio***] of Bishops...

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¹⁵⁷ cf. CS III, p. 409.

Section Five

The Abandonment of St. Gaspar Bertoni and A Modern Application: Ecclesial Obedience

Introduction

[1] The ***Agape***' of Jesus - as He Himself is - has to be 'incarnate'. Moral theology speaks, for example, of 'fraternal humility'¹⁵⁸ - biblical roots for this might be found in the following Pauline phrase:

... There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always think of the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first, but everybody things of other people's interests in stead...¹⁵⁹

[2] For the Stigmatine Founder, Jesus Christ was indeed 'incarnate', real , alive, present - an eloquent Word Keeping this in mind, the Stigmatine Community, with the Church, is on the threshold of another century, a new millennium. The Congregation is called to express its abandonment to God in its 'incarnate' manifestation, the **Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops**.

[a] It is said that Christian obedience is credible only as something suffered, united with Jesus, for the Reign of God which is still coming. Any discussion on religious obedience which does not begin with Christology, will never reach the heights it is intended to achieve, will never reach its decisive and ultimate motivation. The Church can never reflect on itself - unless she uses as a mirror, measuring stick, the august Person of Jesus Christ.

[b] The Synoptics present Jesus as prevalently in acts, expressed in words - John and Paul offer Him more particularly as a result of their inspired reflections. Their contemplation leads to considering His whole life, as already completed - and they uncover the central mystery of the Christ-event, which they seek to describe by names, or titles.

[c] John eventually comes to conclusive formulae, and brings out in such emphasis, the unity between the Father and the Son. John's Gospel speaks far more clearly than any other of a 'mandate' which Jesus received from the Father, and

¹⁵⁸ cf. B. Haring, CSSR, *The Law of Christ*

¹⁵⁹ cf. Ph 2: 3, ff..

which - in human terms - constitutes Him as a Person.¹⁶⁰ In His human existence, Jesus expresses this Mission [cf. Jn 4:34] - His being is a kind of existential obedience [cf. Ep 2].

[3] As a result, a very basic type of obedience should be maintained toward the Lord within the Church herself. The first disciples abandoned all things, to be sent everywhere, even to the ends of the earth - to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ. each believer is called to measure his/her mandate of faith, measuring it in the light of God Himself [cf. Rm 12:3] - or, in the light of the Glory of Jesus [cf. Ep 4:10, f.].

[4] It is not the Church which distributes the gifts of grace - she is only the channel. Instrument, established by Jesus Christ Himself. No one alone is the Church, unless Christ. So, each believer is called to the 'obedience of faith' [cf. DV 5] - each one is invited to the subordinate to her - through each one's obedience, one also has an avenue of approach to Jesus Himself.¹⁶¹

[5] The Stigmatine Founder offers a program of **abandonment to God expressed in the Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops:**

- the Personal Abandonment of each Stigmatine - this is the Abandonment of the entire stigmatine **Personnel: *Quicumque***

- Geographical Abandonment: ***Quocumque***.

- Apostolic Abandonment: ***Quodcumque***.

• • •

1. ***Quicumque***: the Total Abandonment of the Personnel:

a. **Personal Abandonment**

The Stigmatine Founder, described as "A Model of Holy Abandonment", taught this demanding spirituality more by his life than by his words. "Holy Abandonment" matured in Fr. Bertoni as the end result of a struggle - perhaps, too, somewhat as a spiritualization of his own insecurity and lack of self-confidence that may have been part of his make-up. However, once "abandonment" emerged as his basic quality, Fr. Bertoni seemed able to carry out apostolates that were beyond his own human nature. In his description of the **difficult Stigmatine vocation** [cf. CF # 185], we might also apply these other words of his:

¹⁶⁰ cf. Jn 10:19; 12:49; 14:31.

¹⁶¹ cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Lo Spirito e l'istituzione. Saggi teologici* IV. Brescia: Morcelliana 1979, pp. 115-138, ff.]

... To begin the task well, it is necessary to have already acquired heroic virtue...

From his early priesthood at least, Fr. Bertoni was inspired by the idea of one day establishing a community along Ignatian principles. Hence, with this added incentive for his ready apostolic spirituality, he realized more deeply than many, the pressing need for "heroic virtue" to undertake important tasks in the service of God, through the Bishops of the Church. He was truly inspired by the ***Suscipe*** of St. Ignatius Loyola:

... Receive, O Lord, my freedom ...whatever I have, or possess... I give it all back to you... Your love and grace are sufficient for me...¹⁶²

The faithful minister is in conformity with the Will of God not only in his response, but also in the manner of operating.¹⁶³ He used as his basic principle a thought he so often repeated:

... We must go behind the Lord, and never ahead of Him... It is necessary never to take a step ahead of Him, but to follow Him in everything...¹⁶⁴

This principle of his was something he very often suggested to those who had sought him out for spiritual direction:

...Once again, the Lord has known how to take care of matters - this is just one more argument for every circumstance to be abandoned to His adorable Providence...¹⁶⁵

The entire Stigmatine plan develops from this sense of personal abandonment as the characteristic spirituality of the Founder. As each one grows in his faith, hope and charity flowing from Divine Providence, the rest of the plan is but the exterior expression of this interior basic "frame of reference", or attitude.

b. Abandonment of all of the Stigmatine Personnel:

The mentality of Holy Abandonment, presented as a challenge to each Stigmatine, serves as the basis of the consecration of the whole personnel to the service of the Church through the Bishops... This sense of "totality" noted in the response of Jesus Christ is meant to permeate the response of the Christian. The Stigmatine is called to witness this in a particular manner:

¹⁶² cf. Mss B # 2658; cf. also Nello II, p. 32.

¹⁶³ cf. Mss B # 6079.

¹⁶⁴ cf. *Summarium Additionale*, p. 265; cf. also Mss B # 5990.

¹⁶⁵ St. Gaspar Bertoni, Letter 43; Ep p. 105; cf. also Nello II, p. 259.

... In fatigue, in the vigils, and other situations, the [Stigmatine] should remain with Me - so that each one might share in the victory and in the happiness in the thought that He will be with me in travail and fatigue [St. Ignatius.]

He invites each one to Himself with these words: This is My most just will: to take back to Myself the dominion over the whole world, to weaken all My enemies, and thus entire into the glory of My Father. Therefore, anyone who chooses to come with me, will have to share My fatigue, since the reward is in proportion to the fatigue... [St. Ignatius].

'If anyone wishes to come after Me....' [cf. Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23].¹⁶⁶

This is the way the Stigmatine Founder described his efforts to the Holy Father - he saw it all as a community effort, with each one dedicated to his own and to several other tasks:

... Should it seem to the Holy Spirit, and to you, Most Holy Father, that our work should result for the service [*ossequio*] of Christ our Lord, and that it be of some use to the Church ... this is my declared purpose and that of my companions; to give ourselves totally, each of us, to the service of the Lord, and His Church, if He should think us worthy of such an undertaking...¹⁶⁷

Fr. Lenotti offers his comments on this spirit of totality that would involve the entire Congregation of the Apostolic Missionaries:

... What should an Apostolic Missionary be? ... The Missionary does not fear dangers, and is not afraid of hard work, whenever it is a question of rendering oneself a suitable instrument of divine glory and of the good of souls. The Apostolic Missionary is one who is ready for everything, *paratus ab omnia...*¹⁶⁸

...

2. *Quocumque*: Geographical Abandonment

There was no limitation to the scope of the plan for the Apostolic Missionaries. Modeled on the first Apostles, called to be witnesses of the resurrection to the ends of the earth, the Stigmatine is presented with the ideal that there be a willingness **to go anywhere in the Diocese and the world**. He preached thus:

¹⁶⁶ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Retreat for Priests, "The Reign of Christ" i, in: CS I, pp. 167, ff.].

¹⁶⁷ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Letter to Pope Gregory XVI, in: Ep. p. 341.

¹⁶⁸ cf. CS III, p. 404.

... Our Leader sends His faithful ones throughout the world: consider how the Master of the universe sends throughout the world His chosen Apostles, disciples and other ministers. In their turn, they impart the salvific teaching to every class, condition and state of humanity... He sends them throughout the world! How beautiful are the feet of those who preach peace [cf. Rm 10:15]. Could anything be blacking? 'Yahweh is my Shepherd, I lack nothing!' [Ps 23:1]. Francis Xavier, with confidence such as this, immediately accepted the divine election to the mission in India - he set sail with only his breviary and Crucifix...¹⁶⁹

In Fr. Lenotti's words, St. Francis Xavier was indeed a "privileged Apostolic Missionary" in the fullest sense of the title.

In one of Fr. Bertoni's sermons, from which we derive much concerning the Stigmatine spirit, we find him describing St. Francis of Assisi's world vision:

... Italy was not enough for him: he wanted the whole world! As soon as he had seven followers, he sat down with them to divide up the world. 'Let's go!', he said to them, 'wherever God and the need of souls cry out to us in a loud voice!' It was as though heaven had been witness to this statement, because in a short while, the numbers did increase, and he sent them throughout the world. And Francis did not die until he had abundantly provided for the whole world, to the four corners of the globe, he sent such valid workers...¹⁷⁰

While Francis was able to realize his dream before dying, the Stigmatine Founder was denied this consolation, and outward sign of divine approval. When Fr. Bertoni died on Sunday afternoon, June 12, 1853, the men were out teaching catechism, the well known *Quarta Classe* - which in another study some Stigmatines thought should be the fundamental Apostolic Mission. The whole membership on that day, 37 years after the founding on November 4, 1816, were perhaps about ten men. Many founders and foundresses have had the great privilege and blessing from God of seeing their communities spread throughout the world - in Fr. Bertoni's lifetime, the Stigmatines never left Verona. The day he died, they were all in their native city [with the exception of Fr. Bragato] and they assembled in his room to view the recently deceased remains of their beloved founder.

In one of his letters, Fr. Bertoni made a play on words with the Church of San Firmo, and the Italian word *fermo*, meaning "stop". In making this play on words, he

¹⁶⁹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, in: CS I, pp. 190, ff.].

¹⁷⁰ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Panegyric in honor of St. Francis - October 4, 1808 - in: Mss B # 1837.

was expressing the hope that the Sisters of Mother Naudet would not stop in Verona at St. Firmus', which was always in the same place!¹⁷¹

Fr. Lenotti preached this version of the Apostolic Missionary:

... We have not been called to stand still, but rather, we should be ready, like soldiers, and disposed to assist all, and not in any one single Diocese, but throughout the world... Therefore, what is needed is a heart as broad as the world! It is true that right now the Lord keeps us restricted and humiliated - but, nonetheless, He has given us the grace to help out in various Dioceses, and we hope that when the proper time arrives, established by His Providence, He will give us the grace. We do not know His designs over this Congregation. Nonetheless, we should have a great and generous heart, and trust ourselves to God. If we are not lacking, God will not be...

... But if we are ever to be disposed to go anywhere in the world, it is necessary that we begin now by being indifferent regarding our rooms,¹⁷² clothing, food, trips, in everything...

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3. **Quodcumque:** Apostolic Abandonment: "Any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever..."

Quoting the Constitutions of St. Ignatius and the Commentary on them by Francis Suarez [cf. *De Religione Societatis Iesu*], the Stigmatine Founder offers a very broad concept of the **Apostolic Mission for the assistance of Bishops**. Here are a few of the Original Constitutions he copied from Suarez:

... [The Professed] will be dedicated to preaching publicly, or instructing the people with public and private catechism lessons: having pious colloquies and holy conversations; these serve for the fraternal correction of vices, and for exhorting people to the exercise of virtues and the frequenting the sacraments;

spiritual direction, leading people to the acquisition of perfection;

preaching the spiritual exercises;

promoting pious congregations, or associations;

¹⁷¹ cf. Letter 12 to Mother Naudet, January 9, 1815, in: Ep p.50.

¹⁷² Domestic Exhortations, in: cf. CS II, p. 145.

attending devoutly to the spiritual care of the sick, and especially of the dying.¹⁷³

... Being occupied in the formation of Clerics, both in the seminaries, as well as in the parishes, and in our houses; by means of teaching, private conferences, and assisting them to advance in studies and piety.¹⁷⁴

... The Christian education of Children and the youth, and un-instructed persons - this should be promoted with every effort by our men, through the oratories, specialized catechetics, and also through private instructions.¹⁷⁵

This whole section of the Stigmatine Founder's Rule is dedicated to the special tasks of the 'Professed' members, those with the intended Fourth Vow - therefore, the ministries are essential to the charism. The original Constitutions continue:

... The special occupation of the 'Professed' Priests: It is their duty not only to teach the truths that are necessary or useful to know for the obtaining of eternal life, by means of specialized preaching, retreats - and also by explaining the first elements of the faith and morality, particularly to children, and to un-instructed persons, in the Oratories, and in both public and private catechetical instructions. This whole manner is supremely useful to the Church, and therefore, it is to be most highly recommended.¹⁷⁶

In Fr. Bertoni's charism, he saw the great value of communicating the faith 'one on one' - with his emphasis on even private catechism lessons, almost a kind of 'tutoring' the young, the un-lettered, in the faith. Therefore, it should be without surprise that he must insisted upon the sacrament of Reconciliation as a special ministry to continue the effects of the preached word. In his view, the Confessor should also seek to be the 'friend' of the penitent. We find this Rule:

... [It is the special task of the Stigmatine] to hear the confessions of people of all walks of life, but especially the poor, of the young, and to seek to lead them to the due frequency of the sacraments...¹⁷⁷

All of these specifics may be found in the classic commentary of Suarez and the "**Religious State of the Society of Jesus**" - by which "**more in particular**" the Society is to serve the Church. In the early Jesuit tradition, and still in their Original

¹⁷³ cf. CF # 163.

¹⁷⁴ cf. CF # 164.

¹⁷⁵ cf. CF # 165.

¹⁷⁶ cf. CF # 182.

¹⁷⁷ cf. CF # 183.

Constitutions, the teaching of Catechism with specialized instruction, even to the unlearned, is one of the 'proper' ministries of the Society¹⁷⁸ - as it is one of the special ministries of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission.

Our first two Superior Generals have left among their papers, a rather detailed description of the **various and proper ministries** of the Congregation:

Fr. John Mary Marani - Superior General from 1853-1811:

...The end of the Institute is 'Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops', i.e., for their help [*obsequium ... auxilium*]. Therefore, the members of this Institute ought to be always - both day and night - [prepared and ready to go, at any indication of their Superior, even at a moment's notice - anywhere, whether near or far, in the city, or to the country, to any class of persons:

- to give missions;
- to hear confessions;
- to administer to those in prison; especially those condemned to death;
- to supply the chair of philosophy or theology; to help out in a parish which unexpectedly is without a pastor -

And once they have finished one task, and even if it is not yet brought to term in accord with their own liking, they should be ready to hand it over to someone else, in order to take up another more burdensome and difficult task.

And all this is to be done - and even more, should it ever be necessary - with joyful hearts and happy faces, without asking to be excused - either because their members do not feel qualified, or claiming that they have not studied enough. They are to accept such service without rationalization, without pretensions, and without receiving anything for their efforts.

In the ideal, the Stigmatines are called to be *parati ad omnia*, for whatever, and wherever the Superior may send them.

The Superiors, in their turn, are not ever to refuse a Bishop in real need, whenever they can, or, whenever they have capable

¹⁷⁸ o.c., p. 206.

personnel. The Superiors will also try to respond to the needs of Pastors in their necessities...¹⁷⁹

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Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, Superior General from 1871-1875:

Although he was Superior General for the shortest of all the Stigmatine Generals [1871-1875], he had indeed a universal apostolic vision regarding the Stigmatine Mission. In his Domestic Exhortations, he compared the Stigmatine Mission to that of the Jesuits -- he called St. Francis Xavier an **Apostolic Missionary** of the highest order - and he was preparing in those years a group of young priests for foreign missions: Denmark, and the United States of America, and elsewhere. With his untimely death at the age of only 54, and deaths and sicknesses among the first Foreign Mission Band being prepared, the Congregation waited almost 30 years after his death to come to the United States.

This is still another description of the **Apostolic Missionary** left by Fr. Lenotti, who was trained personally for the Stigmatine life by the Founder himself. These are his words:

... Therefore, first of all, we are Missionary-Soldiers, as we have said on another occasion - and by the very fact that we are soldiers, we are called to serve. The soldier is called to serve his prince and nation, that is why it is called military service. We are Missionaries to serve God, our King - and Jesus Christ, our Captain and Leader - and the Church, the Christian Homeland. We are not, therefore, Missionaries to command, but rather to serve: Let us keep this clearly in mind, my brothers:

'The disciple is not superior to the teacher, nor the servant greater than his master' [cf. Lk 6:40].

The Son of God Himself, the Head of all Missionaries, 'came not to be served, but to serve [cf. Mt 20:28] - 'assumed the condition of a slave' [cf. Ph 2:7] - served for 30 years in a humble shop/ served in preaching even to the point of washing the feet of His Apostles, and served His divine Father and humanity. He also serves right now in the Most Holy Sacrament, humbling Himself under the species of bread.

Thus, Missionaries and apostolic men are called to be ready for the needs of our neighbors: 'I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost' [cf. 1 Co 9:22]. [The Apostolic Missionary is called] not to

¹⁷⁹ cf. *Regola Marani*, in: CS II, pp. 245, ff. In this Part, Fr. Marani cited the Original Constitutions of the Founder, ## 67; 162-164; 182-186 - and furthermore, he made concrete applications of the Founder's Constitutions on obedience and its levels, described in CF ## 139-151.

withdraw from hearing confessions, from distributing Holy Communion, from preaching, instructing, and administering the Sacraments - but, to any ministry whatsoever that God might want.

We are Missionaries, but servants. We do not show repugnance... but serve also under the weight of fatigue and trial. And we are called to serve God and the Church in the very first place...¹⁸⁰

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CONCLUSION

[1] This total self-giving to the **various and proper ministries** of the **Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance of Bishops**. Has also been eloquently described by Fr. Bertoni himself in his rule. He wrote:

... Furthermore, no one should try to arrange it so he might be sent to one place rather than another, but each one should allow himself to be moved by obedience: yet, it is in no way wrong to show oneself ready or disposed.

In fact, Isaiah offered himself, and Jeremiah excused himself - but, the latter did not refuse to go when he was sent, nor did Isaiah presume to go until he had been purified by the flame from the altar. St. Gregory said that no one should dare to approach the sacred ministries unless he is purified - nor, should the one who is chosen contradict the choice in pride, under the specious appearance of humility...¹⁸¹

[2] In a much more existential manner, Fr. Bertoni has left this glowing description of his closest collaborator, whose life style is truly that of the **Apostolic Missionary**:

... During the day, Fr. Marani teaches school at the Stimate: evenings and free days he helps out at the house of the Dereletti. AT the Stimate, he teaches his classes, and then studies for a while in the library for his preaching. At the Dereletti, on Saturday evenings and Sundays, he hears confessions for long hours, and with much fruit for the people in the area.

The other evenings, he gives Moral theology cases, much like the old Fr. Guerrieri used to do. He discusses and resolves, as the need may arise, the most difficult cases, as these come in day by day. The Lord has gifted him with the light, prudence and clarity far beyond the ordinary.

¹⁸⁰ Fr. Lenotti, in: CS III, pp. 411, ff.

¹⁸¹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Original Constitutions, CF # 186.

On Thursdays, he serves as Vocations' Examiner for the seminarians at the Seminary. He also receives penitents from all walks of life and at any time, even interrupting his dinner, supper, and giving up his rest.

Likewise, on Feast Days, he hears confessions in the Choir of St. Stephen's, until it is time for him to give the Instruction at St. Sebastian's, which he continues until the Lord knows when. The people listen to him willingly, and it seems that the Word of God is not just thrown at them, but it is received in good soil. Before taking up again, the course of his Instructions, I sent him to San Zeno's to preach the Octave after All Soul's Day...¹⁸²

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¹⁸² Letter 4 to Fr. Bragato, in: Ep pp. 315, ff.

PART TWO PARTICULAR STUDIES

Section One

The "End" of the Congregation:

A Few Objective Elements in the Charism of the Stigmatine Founder

[A General Chapter Intervention]

[Two Opinions - XXIXth General Chapter Intervention - January - March 1970]

J. Henchey, CSS

Introduction:

[1] The scope of this presentation of mine is that of offering my personal opinion regarding the specific apostolate of our Congregation. In this post-Vatican II era, there are few communities, I believe, who may boast of a program that is as up-dated as our own in its apostolic activity. This program which is summarized in our apostolic service offered to meet the needs of the Church today is found indicated, for those who would give them some time, in the Original Constitutions of our Founder.

[2] However, there exist among us, as there have existed for some time, two general opinions regarding the primary apostolate:

[a] One of these opinions follows Fr. Marani's interpretation regarding the "end" of our Congregation. Interpreting the intentions of the Founder, Fr. Marani maintained that we ought to serve the Church primarily by preaching Parish Missions to the People - and only after this has been complied with, he offers a list of subordinate apostolic activities. However, he himself does not always seem clear to everyone: for example in his "Report" addressed to the civil authorities, of December 14, 1853, he says simply that "the scope of this institute is that of assisting the Bishop in his needs." Then, in his Appeal addressed to the Holy See on the following day, he petitioned for this title for the Congregation: **Order of the Sacred Stigmata**. But, after six months he wrote: ... *huius Sodalitatis membra vocantur Missionarii Apostolici...* ["the members of this Community are called Apostolic Missionaries"]. Then, regarding the scope of the Community, he added this restriction: ... *praecipua capita eorum in quibus Episcopis auxilium praestat Sodalitas sunt, praeter Missiones...* ["the principal headings under which this Sodality offers its services to the Bishops, in addition to the (Parish) Missions, are...].

[b] The second opinion - which I believe has always been the most widespread among us - is that the Stigmatines serve the Church: ... *per ministerium Verbi Dei quodcumque, et Clericorum et iuvenum institutionem, dependentemente dai*

Vescovi, e in loro ossequio...¹⁸³ ["through any Ministry whatsoever of the Word of God, the formation of the Clergy and the instruction of youth, depending on the Bishops and in their assistance"].

[3] It seems to me that within the context of our Founder one might indeed discover a valid program also for this present period. In every period, the Stigmatines have sought to interpret this program, and to adapt it to the needs of the Church of their times. With this statement, I do not intend to say that the Congregation has always lived the subjective element of the Founder's Charism in the best possible manner. Fr. Tomasi, our Fifth Superior General, wrote on the occasion of the First Centenary of the life of our Institute:

... If we have in some measure lost [this original spirit], the Lord can give it to us anew; the humble recognition that we have in some way lost it, and the vivid desire of reacquiring it integrally, are the sole conditions that the Lord asks of us to make this gift to us...¹⁸⁴

[4] In truth, these words should be applied more to the Spirit of the Founder than to his Apostolic charism. Regarding the apostolate, on the other, in my opinion the essential approach has been maintained, and that our present Constitution # 3 contains the essential elements of the Founder's original plan. This is my opinion. I would like to add right away that it is our duty here as a Chapter to do more to bring alive even more the spirit of the Founder in our various apostolic activities today.

1. The Influence of St. Ignatius

a. First of all, I believe that in order to understand well Fr. Bertoni's intentions it would be useful to know the extent of the influence he received from the Founder of the Company of Jesus. While it is true that our Founder did not wish to make of himself "other Jesuits",¹⁸⁵ it cannot be denied that he experienced a clear dependence from the Company of Jesus. The short passage for his Spiritual Diary is quite well known to Stigmatines - the setting is that the Founder is on Retreat with a few priest friends - and with them he made a visit to the Altar of St. Ignatius:

... It seemed to me that the Saint [Ignatius] received us well and invited us to promote the greater glory of God, just as he did, and through the same

¹⁸³ This is found among the "Responses" of the Capitular Commission of the IXth General Chapter, September 23, 1887.

¹⁸⁴ Fr. Tomasi's Letter during World War I, 1916, may be found in: BC I, p. 7.

¹⁸⁵ cf. Fr. D. Martinis, BERTONIANO, Supplemento to n. 3, 1954, pp. 411-413]

ways, even though not in using all those means that he was able to make use of...¹⁸⁶

b. In the same sense, he wrote some eight years later in a Letter to Mother Naudet:

... The Arch-priest Galvani, is totally imbued with St. Ignatius. He has offered me the Stimate, as an opportune place to establish a Congregation of Priests, who would live under the rules of St. Ignatius...¹⁸⁷

c. The "End of the Company of Jesus" is expressed right at the beginning of the introductory **Formula** at the beginning of their Constitutions. The purpose of the Jesuits is to serve the one Lord, and the Church, His Spouse, under the Roman Pontiff - this for the defense and the propagation of Christian doctrine. Their principal means are public preaching, conferences, and every other ministry of the Word of God whatsoever: the Spiritual exercises, with the teaching of the Christian truths to children and to the un-lettered, the hearing of Confessions, the administration of the Sacraments for the spiritual consolation of faithful Christians.¹⁸⁸

d. In a manner that is even more brief, and almost as a kind of summary of the purpose of the Company of Jesus, the following appears in their Constitutions:

...the scope and the end of this Company is to go here and there, through the various parts of the world, by mandate of the Vicar of Christ, our Lord, by from the Superior of the Company, to preach, to hear confessions, and to make use of all those other means that one might use with the grace of God, for the assistance of souls ...¹⁸⁹

1.] Comparing this now with the "End" of the Stigmatine Congregation [which is taken word for word from Suarez' Commentary on the State of Religion of the Society of Jesus], the Founder chose these words:

... the scope of our Congregation is that of serving the Church with the various and proper ministries of its vocation, under the direction of the Bishops...¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ St. Gaspar Bertoni, in: MP, September 15, 1808, in: CS IV, p. 46.

¹⁸⁷ cf. Ep, p. 130.

¹⁸⁸ cf. **Formula SJ**, # 1

¹⁸⁹ Constitutions SJ, # 308.

¹⁹⁰ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Original Constitutions, CF # 185.

¹⁹¹ cf. ib., CF # 163.

¹⁹² cf. ÇS III, pp. 409, ff.

2.] I believe that these **various and proper ministries of the Congregation; vocation**, and these **ministries that are proportionate** include those ministries included in Section X of Fr. Bertoni's original Constitutions, in Chapter II:

Those Means with which the Institute promotes the Salvation of its Neighbors.

Among these "means" we find the following [all taken from Suarez]:

- the taking on of the clerical state, and every disposition to assume this perfectly;
- the administration of the Sacraments, especially those of Penance and the Eucharist;
- celebrating Masses, imploring the fruit of the sermons and the confessions;
- every Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever;
- the formation and training of all in the clerical state.

e. Among the "forms of the Ministry of the Word of God"¹⁹¹, the Stigmatine Founder places the following:

- preaching publicly;
 - or instructing the people with public and private catechism lessons;
 - holding pious and holy conversations:
 - thus, at times fraternally correcting vices;
 - exhorting people to the practice of virtue, and to frequenting the Sacraments;
 - and encouraging people to the acquisition of perfection;
 - preaching Retreats;
 - promoting pious Congregations, or associations;
 - attending devotedly to the spiritual care of the sick, especially those who are dying.
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f. In the opinion I am presenting here, Fr. Lenotti seems to have understood our Stigmatine service [*ossequio*] of the Church in this broader manner, according to a rather ample list of ministries of the Word of God that he presents as we see from his Domestic Exhortations:

... it is necessary to learn how to manage well the Divine Word, with studies, with sacred reading, and to use it well according to the circumstances: in the confessional, in the prisons, on the podium, in the pulpit, from the altars, in the retreats, missions, Oratories, days of recollection, familiar conversations...¹⁹²

1.] Form this, it can be seen that for Fr. Lenotti in his Exhortations in the House of Novitiate, the [Parish?] "Missions" are simply included among the many other ministries of the Word of God that the Community is called to accomplish. He stated:

... we are Missionaries to serve God, our King ... and Jesus Christ, our Captain... and the Church. Let us never withdraw from hearing confessions, from sharing the word, preaching, instructing, administering the sacraments, and any ministry whatever that God would want...¹⁹³

2.] It seems to me proper to note how this listing is very similar to that contained in the *Epitome* to the Jesuit Constitutions of the Company of Jesus:

... The principal ministries of the Society are the following: for the defense and the propagation of the faith, and the progress of souls in the life and doctrine of Christ, to deliver public preaching and conferences, and every other ministry of the Word of God whatsoever: to preach retreats; to instruct the young and the un-lettered in Christian doctrine; to hear the confessions of the faithful of Christ, and to administer the other Sacraments to them; to perform the works of charity, in so far as this is judged for the greater glory of God and the common good...¹⁹⁴

3.] Likewise in the Jesuit Constitutions there is found another similarity for the Stigmatine Founder. One reads the following:

... however, in the formula of the vow, mention is made of teaching catechism to the young because it is considered to have been recommended with particular force this holy exercise due to the singular service that such ministry renders to God, our Lord, for the assistance of souls, and because this kind of ministry runs the risk of being forgotten or

¹⁹³ cf. CS III, pp. 411, ff.]

¹⁹⁴ cf. Epitome SJ, to # 22, Par. 6, # 7.

neglected, that for other more spectacular ministries there would not be the same risk, as for preaching, and the like...¹⁹⁵

g. In Section IX of the Stigmatine Founder's Constitutions, the question of the 'Professed' is discussed. These would be the **Apostolic Missionaries**, so specifically named by the Superior General of the Congregation, and they would profess solemn vows as a result. After having explained the various ministries of the Congregation, these words appear; ***Verbi Dei quodcumque Ministerium, Clericorum institutionem***, and the like. In Chapter VI of this section of these same "Professed" Fr. Bertoni likewise speaks of teaching catechism to the "un-lettered", to the "youth". St. Gaspar chose these words from Suarez' Commentary:

... The Special Occupations of the Professed Fathers:

It is their task not only to teach the truths that are necessary or helpful to obtain eternal life by preaching, retreats, conferences, but also to explain the first elements of faith and morals, especially to the youth, and to other un-lettered persons [*pueris et rudibus*] in the Oratories and in both public and private catechism instructions. This, too, is supremely useful to the Church; and therefore it is supremely to be recommended to them¹⁹⁶.

h. In his time, Fr. Lenotti likewise explained the Founder's central ideal:

... The perspective of the Very Reverend Fr. Gaspar was always the good of the Church; therefore, he was always attentive to observe the present needs of the Church herself, and for this he studied, wrote, and preached...¹⁹⁷

Summary: For these reasons, it seems to me that our Founder left the actual choice of the apostolic activities of the Congregation in the hands of the Bishops, who would be moved by their changing needs, according to the times and places. IT also seems to me that the Founder had in mind a rather broad program, within the confines of the Ignatian expression: ***Ministerium Verbi Dei quodcumque***. The choice of the actual apostolic means to be employed would depend on the actual needs of the local Churches. Therefore, I believe that these were the reasons that Fr. Lenotti found such similarity between the Stigmatines and the Jesuits:

... It is seen clearly how the intention of Fr. Bertoni ... was to found a Congregation, which, like the Company of Jesus is in a special way dedicated, oriented toward the service [*ossequio*] and dispositions of the

¹⁹⁵ cf. Constitutions SJ, # 528.

¹⁹⁶ cf. CF # 182 - from Fr. Suarez.

¹⁹⁷ *Summarium Additionale*, Doc. XX, p. 154.

Roman Pontiff - and that our Congregation would be dedicated, determined in a totally special manner, and signed to the service and assistance [ossequio] of the Bishops...¹⁹⁸

This leads to a second point: Our Specific End. Fr. Bertoni stated:

2. **The End: *Missionarii Apostolic in obsequium Episcoporum***

a. It seems to me that this study of our Stigmatine history might show that our earlier members, in general, did not interpret these words in a limited manner. I believe that the majority through the years have understood these words as a kind of analogy, comparison. This would mean that we are being called as Stigmatines to imitate the life of the Apostles, and that our "end" is to become Missionaries sent to accede, through each one's specialized assistance the Ministry of the Word of God, to the requests, even those unexpected ones, of the successors of the Apostles.

b. It also seems to me that our Founder purposefully used an expression that was quite open to a broad interpretation, for a later specification, depending on the changing needs of the Bishops. IT does not seem that our Founder has explained these expressions clearly within his own Constitutions, left unfinished. Examples of some of these expressions would be the following:

- *apostolici muneris* [CF # 2];
- *perfectum opus sacerdotium; apostolicam missionem* [CF # 7];
- *officium sacerdotale* [CF # 76];
- *Missionarii Apostolici* [CF # 85]
- *graviora ministeria quae Sacerdotium requirunt* [CF # 158].

The other opinion regarding the "Stigmatine Apostolic Mission" would interpret these expressions to mean the essential end of the Congregation, indicating the Parish Missions to every class of believers. Hence, all of these expressions [the majority of which are taken verbally from Suarez, with the broader Ignatian interpretation in mind] would mean Parish Missions. However, in our Stigmatine history, these have been interpreted in a broader, and less exclusive manner.

c. In this regard, there was a Capitular Commission, chosen by the XVIIIth General Chapter to prepare the Constitutions for the following General Chapter to be held in 1914. The members of this Commission were: Fathers Piccoli, Zaupa, Fiorio,

¹⁹⁸ cf. CS III, pp. 409, ff.

John B. Castellani and Sozzi.¹⁹⁹ This Capitular Commission explicitly these matters. This is the interpretation they offered of the Stigmatine "Apostolic Mission":

...Our special end consists in giving a special assistance to the Bishops in their apostolic mission of saving souls...²⁰⁰

d. The above-mentioned Commission reduced the **various and proper ministries of our vocation** to four headings. This reminds us, too, that the Founder referred to this, our vocation, as "one that was arduous and difficult"²⁰¹. The Commission found all these concepts, and also the list of our various apostolates - and not some primary apostolate [such as Parish Missions] - in the Founder's Original Constitutions²⁰².

1.] In my view, the *ministeria graviora*, the *munus apostolicum* and the **Apostolic Mission**: are the same. When our Congregation has served the Church with eminent services, even though in different ways, it has achieved its end.

2.] As for the **Apostolic Mission** I believe that this is parallel to the same ideal in the Jesuit Constitutions. From the beginning to the end, the Constitutions of St. Ignatius [as the Commentary of Francis Suarez] speak of a **Mission**, which is described as an **apostolic expedition**. The XXXIst General Congregation of the Jesuits declared that the Constitutions of the Company are **Missionary** - and that from the time of the Pontifical Bull, *Licet Debitum* [1549], the obedience within the Society acquired its full apostolic and missionary sense.²⁰³

3.] For the Jesuits, the word **Mission** can be synonymous with **ministry**. In general, **Mission** is defined as 'that which refers to the divine worship and the good of the Christian religion, without bringing excuses, and without asking anything for the expenses of the journey.'²⁰⁴

e. We have already seen a list of the **principal ministries**, or the **Missions** of the Company of Jesus - and that there is a clear similarity with the Constitutions of our Founder. Descending now to particulars, the Jesuit Constitutions speak of the various **Missions**: as, the **Foreign Missions**; then, the **Missions of the Superior of the Society**. The Superior General of the Company, by concession made by the Supreme

¹⁹⁹ cf. *Bertoniano* 1911, pp. 25-27.

²⁰⁰ cf. Notes of the Commission. p. 20.

²⁰¹ cf. CF # 185.

²⁰² cf. CF ## 161-167. cf. *Bertoniano* n. 1, 1968, pp. 240, ff.

²⁰³ cf. Documents of the XXXIst General Congregation of the SJ. n. 3, note 5; n. 4

²⁰⁴ cf. Constitution SJ # 7.

Pontiff, could send any person whatsoever of the Company, wherever though would seem to be to serve the great usefulness. However, wherever all the members might be assigned, they will always remain at the disposition of His Holiness²⁰⁵.

f. The Constitutions of the Company of Jesus speak also of the **Missions to the People**. It is interesting to note, however, that for the Jesuits, the **Missions to the People** clearly are not the end of the Company of Jesus²⁰⁶. Furthermore, the Jesuits also imposed other restrictions on their handling of **Parish Missions** or the Spiritual Exercises. Let us read from their Constitutions:

... if any of the occupations are of a more universal good, and they extend their assistance to a greater number of persons, as preaching does, sacred conferences - or, if other occupations are more particular, as hearing confessions, or the giving of the Spiritual Exercises - and in the hypothesis that one has to make a choice between the two, it is necessary to give preference to the former²⁰⁷.

g. Therefore, I believe that our Stigmatine Founder's Constitutions ## 69-76 might be understood in this manner: the promotion of our confreres to the *officium sacerdotale* is geared to the *munus missionum dirigendarum*. In other words, the **Missions**, and their direction, are understood by our Founder as a very efficacious means to prepare young priests for other ministries. We find a concept that is very close to this idea in the Epitome; of the Jesuits:

... the members can be destined not so much to the sacred ministry to be carried out in the manner of workers, but to the more humble ministries, such as the Missions in the villages and townships, which do not require great preparation, nor are they ministries that would last more than about a month: for this purpose they are taken on that they might serve as a certain preparation for future ministries, an excitement of zeal for souls and an exercise in abnegation²⁰⁸.

1.] For these reasons, it does not seem to me that our Founder ever understood the **Apostolic Mission**, the *muneris apostolici, graviora ministeria, opus perfectum sacerdotum*: all these as meaning primarily Parish Missions.

2.] The Constitutions of the Jesuits speak of the **Missions of the Supreme Pontiff**. These are those **Missions** that demand the Professed' members, properly so called, of the Company. Let us read from their Formula of Profession:

²⁰⁵ cf. Constitution SJ # 618.

²⁰⁶ cf. *Bertoniano*, Supplementum to n. 2, 1967, pp. 205, ff.

²⁰⁷ cf. Constitutions SJ # 623.

²⁰⁸ cf. Epitome SJ, n. 434, n. 2.

...I promise a special obedience to the Roman Pontiff regarding the Missions, according to the norm of their Apostolic Letters and these Constitutions...²⁰⁹ .

h. I think that the **Apostolic Mission** in the mind of the Stigmatine Founder would indeed include these *ministeria graviora*, through which the Congregation serves the Church, under the requests of the Bishops. Our history is full of examples of **special ministries** that our members have offered to Bishops. Fr. Bragato, the person who was the "most dear" for our Founder, and also the most useful that we have,²¹⁰ is an example of the sacrifice of the personnel of the Congregation for the good of the Church, to accede to a request of a Bishop for a special endeavor. Our Fathers, who were sacrificed for the Chairs in the Seminary, for me, are another example of these *ministeria graviora*, which demand in the members an authentic specialization.

i. In so far as what pertains to the promotion to the title of **Apostolic Missionary** is concerned, it seems that our first General Chapters considered as necessary for this three qualities, expressed in the Constitutions of the Founder

- the priesthood;
- an uncommon culture, and a proof of one's goodness of life;
- the choice made by the Superior General²¹¹ .

1.] Let us read from the "Appendix" to Part XII of the Constitutions of our Founder approved by the IInd General Chapter:

... To the Superior General there pertains the discerning of the conferral of the grade of Apostolic Missionary upon those whom he judges to be suitable, according to the Constitutions of Fr. Bertoni, in Part IX, Chapter 1²¹² , and by us referred to and prescribed in Chapter I, Paragraph 2.²¹³

2.] As far as Fr. Bragato is concerned, the IIIrd General Chapter in 1871 conferred upon him the title of **Apostolic Missionary**. The Minutes of that

²⁰⁹ cf. Constitutions SJ # 527.

²¹⁰ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Letter to Fr. Bragato, in: Ep p. 311.

²¹¹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Original Constitutions, CF ## 158-160.

²¹² This would mean CF ## 158-161.

²¹³ cf. p. 42 of the original.

Chapter describe him as being **on a Mission to the Imperial Court of Prague**²¹⁴. Fr. Bragato had gone to Prague some 36 years earlier in the quality of Confessor.

3.] In 1889, the IXth General Chapter approved the Constitutions to be presented to the Holy See for approval. Let us read the qualities required of a member in order for him to be declared an **Apostolic Missionary**:

...no one is to be given this grade of membership, unless he is:

- at least 35 years old, and having competed 10 years of vows in our Community;

- Furthermore there is required in him in addition to outstanding piety, a love for the regular discipline, and a zeal for the salvation of souls;

- that he be endowed with a fitting learning, i.e., that he have completed the entire curriculum of theology, and having come through it all with a comprehensive examination with praise;

- and furthermore that he be held in high esteem within the Community uppermost in his mind - either because:

- either for several years he would have been committed to giving the Spiritual exercises, or the sacred missions;

- or that at least for three years he would have served as the Director of some one of our houses;

- or that he would have been genuinely dedicated to the instructing and educating the youth for many years;

- or that he have carried out in outstanding manner some other office, or duty, for the good of the Community, for a fitting length of time.

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²¹⁴ cf. The Original Acts of this IIIrd General Chapter, p. VIII.

CONCLUSION

[1] In conclusion, it seems to me that the End of our Congregation might well be defined as follows:

***... Ecclesiae sub Episcoporum obsequium praestare, per varia et propria
vocationis munera.***²¹⁵

Our apostolic program asks us all to serve:

***... per varia Ecclesiae obsequia, quae pro temporum et occasionum
diversitate occurrunt utilissima erunt.***²¹⁶

In my view, a list of the principal "means" to serve the Church can be found in Section IX of the Constitutions of the Founder, entitled:

***... De Professorum Gradu: Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium, et Clericorum
et iuvenum institutionem, dependentemente dai Vescovi, e in loro ossequio.***

[2] The views expressed by those outside the Congregation, on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities, contemporaries to our first confreres, who have known and appreciated our Congregation, manifest a kind of unanimity regarding our end. They maintain that our men:

***... by their special ecclesiastical vocation, were dedicated and spent
themselves entirely and exclusively on the assistance [ossequio] and serving
the Diocesan Ordinary...***²¹⁷

***... this Congregation never ceased existing and show itself committed to any
ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever, to which they might be invited by their
Bishop.***²¹⁸

[3] The Post Vatican II Era: if we compare now the challenges of Vatican II, it seems to me that if we understand the Apostolic Mission as I have presented it here - then our end renders us most "up-dated". In fact, in the Council Documents we can find so many concepts that we might consider truly "Stigmatine":

²¹⁵ St. Gaspar Bertoni, Original Constitutions, CF # 185.

²¹⁶ cf. CDB # 57.

²¹⁷ cf. *Bertoniano*, n. 1, 1968, p. 245.

²¹⁸ For other texts, cf. the "Appendix" added to Chapter II, of this First Part.

[a] For example, all religious are invited to collaborate with the Bishops.²¹⁹ For us, this is a most favorable insight of our Founder, and today a special appeal is being made, in that we are already called in the strength of our vocation, to the service of the Church under the direction of Bishops.

[b] A further point: our Founder with, St. Thomas Aquinas, places *contemplata aliis tradere* as the end: of our Congregation.²²⁰ The IInd Vatican Council has invited us a number of times to offer the fruit of our contemplation to the faithful.²²¹

[c] The IInd Vatican Council sees the complementarity between the 'sorrowful' and 'glorious' aspects of the one Mystery of Jesus Christ²²² ... Within the Congregation, there were so many years of hesitation between the "Sorrowful Stigmata" and the "Glorious Stigmata", and today we might the 'whole', integral Christ in worship.

[d] We all know that our Founder insisted on the practice of hiddenness and humility. Furthermore, the IInd Vatican Council invited all priests and religious to the humble and hidden life.²²³ I will not dally here to emphasize how Holy Abandonment is indeed the characteristic of our Founder's own life.

[4] Truly, "the spirit of Holy Abandonment is codified in the very Rules of our Institute".²²⁴ I, too, believe that there are many traces of Holy Abandonment in the Constitutions of our Founder. For example, the following are indications of Holy Abandonment:

- his *gratis omnino*²²⁵.
- his ideal of being 'content' with one's own grade of membership.

[5] In my view, the Congregation is conceived by our Founder under the influence of his own personal Holy Abandonment to God's will:

²¹⁹ cf. CD ## 33-35.

²²⁰ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Original Constitutions, CF # 49.

²²¹ cf. PO # 13; OT # 8; PC ## 5 & 8.

²²² cf. LG # 7; SC # 12.

²²³ cf. LG # 41; PO # 15; OT # 2; PC # 13.

²²⁴ cf. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Modello di Santo Abbando*, p. 236.

²²⁵ cf. CF ##3; 92' 102; 184; 297.

[a] This Holy Abandonment needs to continue in the Congregation. Examples are how the Founder never anticipated, but always awaited the clear manifestation of God's Will. In this way, I believe that the Congregation should never insist on our wills with the Bishops, but to await the knowledge from them of their needs for their local Church.

[b] However, this theme would need a further intervention, and this present one is already too long!

[5] The Jesuits really are the "Army of the Pope". I will close this intervention of mine saying that the originality of our Founder is to be sought in his design of a Congregation, composed of men, truly specialized [particularly in the sacred field]. Something like a flying squadron - at the disposition of the Church, under the direction of the Bishops. The secret of the efficacy of a renewed up-dating there has to be found in us the disposition of imitating those heroic virtues of our Founder - recently officially defined by the Church in his life, and wondrously lived by the early Father and brothers of the community.

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Section Two

**[B] The Apostolic Hope of St. Gaspar Bertoni:
Abandonment to God - Availability to the Church
[Week End Reflection - Province of the Holy Cross
Brazil - General Canonical Visitation
November 1, 1990**

**[First Anniversary of the Founder's Canonization: November k, 1989]
[First Centenary of the Approbation of the Constitutions: September 15, 1890]
[25th Anniversary of the Closing of Vatican II].**

1. "Progress": A Fundamental Biblical Law - a number of texts could be cited in this regard:

a. A Few Important Texts

And the child grew, and became strong, and increased in wisdom. And the grace of God was with him.. He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them. His Mother, however, kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom, stature and in grace, before God and men [cf. Lk 2:40, 51, f.; 1 S 2:26; Pr 3:4].

No disciple is greater than his master, nor servant superior to his lord. It suffices that the disciple as his master, or servant like his lord [cf. MT 10:24, ff.]

St. Paul

II Co

We reflect the splendor of the glory of God, we are transfigured into the same image, ever more resplendent [cf. 3:18]

Grace grew among many, and was translated into thanksgiving for the glory of God [cf. 4:15].

Ephesians

And you, too, are all being built up together to serve as a dwelling of God, in the Spirit [cf. 2:20-22].

Thus you have the conditions to comprehend with all the senses what is the length, the width, the height and the depth, to know the love of Christ which exceeds all knowledge so that you would become the total fullness of God [cf. 3:16-19].

This is until all grow into the unity of faith, and the full knowledge of the Son of God, the state of the perfect man through the stature of the fullness of Christ... we will grow in all ... and realize His growth for the true up-building of love [cf. 4:13-16].

Finally, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the strength of his power [cf. 6:10].

Philippians

Be sure that the One Who has begun this good work in you will bring it to full perfection on the day of Christ Jesus [cf. 1:6 - this is a text often quoted by Gaspar Bertoni, as in CF # 185].

May your love grow stronger each day [cf. 1 9, f.].

It is not that I am puffed up or that I have already reached perfection, but that I am moving along so that I might be with Jesus Christ... moving ahead, running for the reward of the vocation from on high, moved by God in Jesus Christ [cf. 3:12]

Colossians

We do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you be raised up to the full knowledge of God [cf. 1:19].

So that he might reach the richness in full of the understanding and the comprehension of the mystery of God, Christ [cf. 2:2-3]

And that you might be dressed anew, and be renewed for the knowledge according to the image of your Creator. But above all, dress yourselves in charity which is the bond of perfection [cf. 3:10-15].

1 Thessalonians

However, you must continue to progress [cf. 4:1]

II Thessalonians

We feel obliged to thank God continually for you in that your faith is growing greatly and the charity you have for one another through your perseverance [cf. 1:3, ff.]

It is so that our God might make you worthy of His vocation so that you might achieve in all the good plan and that your faith might remain active [cf. 1:11].

Hebrews

Let us run with perseverance toward the goal that is proposed to us, with our eyes fixed on the one who is the author and the realization of the faith, Jesus, who in the light of faith rejoiced in the suffering of the Cross [cf. 2:1, f.].

St. James

It is necessary that perseverance should produce a perfect work, that you might become perfect and integral without any deficiency [cf. 1:2-4].

1 Peter

Then you will reach the purpose of your faith which is the salvation of your souls [cf. 1: 8-9].

2 Peter

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [cf. 3:18].

1 John

But for the one who will keep His word, in him truly will the love of God be perfect [cf. 2:5] .

Beloved, we are already the children of God but what we will be has not yet been revealed [cf. 3:2].

Judas

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God, placing your hope in the mercy of our Lord, Jesus Christ, for eternal life [v. 20].

Apocalypse

...Who has ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.. [cf. 3:6, 22].

All of EX-istence is an EX-odus

A Going out from all that is, to what still might be!

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b. St. Gaspar Bertoni - A Pondered History²²⁶

The saints of the Church are the most important commentary on the Gospel because they are the incarnate interpretation of God's Word and thus they serve as a way of access to Jesus Christ, according to Von Balthasar.²²⁷

The saints are those persons who in their quality as members of the Church, through the heroic practice of love and of the other Christian virtues, open themselves up completely through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the call of God.²²⁸

The term "Saint" is not "univocal", but "analogical". Essentially it is employed with particular insistence and emphasis as an attribute of the Name of God - as the **Holy** Trinity, the **Holy** Son of God, the **Holy** Spirit, the **Holy** Eucharist, **Holy** Communion.²²⁹

Holy is not simply one attribute of God out of many, but the word expresses His essence - and this essence is in itself, and in all its exterior applications, from creation until our final return to God: love, mercy: Be **Holy** because I am **holy**, the Lord your God [cf. Lv 19:2; 20:8]. St. Luke presents this **Law of Holiness** in these terms: Be merciful, because I am merciful.²³⁰

In English, there are two distinct words, very similar in their pronunciation and we might say, also in their meaning: **wholly** would signify: "totally", "integrally" with all one's strength, ability, capacity - and **Holy** which means God-like, sharing in his sanctity.

For St. Irenaeus,

... the glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation and communication of His goodness, for which the world was created. God made us 'to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, *to the praise of his glorious grace*, for "the glory of God is man fully alive; moreover man's life is the vision of God: if God's revelation through creation has already obtained life for all beings that dwell on earth, how much more will the Word's manifestation of the Father obtain life for those who see God. The ultimate purpose of creation is that God 'who is the

²²⁶ cf. Wolfgang Beinert, *O Culto dos Santos Hoje*. Sao Paulo. Ed. Paulinas 1990.

²²⁷ ib., p. 5.

²²⁸ ib., p. 11.

²²⁹ ib. p. 13.

²³⁰ ib., p. 29.

creator of all things may at last become all in all, this simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude".²³¹

A Saint is a person who exists in the full possession of self. Holiness is indeed a paradox: a *tremendous mystery*, which stands in the middle, has relationships, and is separate. [Somewhat facetiously, it was often said: From the saints and Superiors - deliver us, O Lord!"]

On the other hand, authentic holiness reveals itself as a kind of splendor, vitality and glory: a genuine saint attracts, fascinates. The *mysterium tremendum* is at the same time, a *mysterium fascinosum*²³².

A saint lives religion integrally - a word that has at least three possible root meanings:

- **re-ligare**: accepting a bond, a most intimate and sublime link of love with the Holy Spirit;
- **re-eligere**: a repetition of one's response when one is elected, chosen to be committed to God;
- **re-legere**: one discovers the authentic fulfillment of life in the word of the Son of God - a kind of on-going conversion.

Holiness is the central theme of the Bible - in its turn, holiness is a vocation, a particular meaning, as the 'holy' book, or the Sacred Scripture - the 'holy' book, written in the divine, holly, sacred tradition²³³.

Jesus Christ manifests a new dimension of what it means to be 'holy': He Himself is the Holy Son of God, sanctified through the Holy Spirit. His Mission consists in particular in His personal Filiation - in communicating the Holy Spirit to human beings²³⁴.

The Holy Spirit appears as a Gift of Love, and He communicates himself intimately as God to us, as sanctifying grace, as the grace of our vocation, which the saintly Stigmatine Founder has termed a vocation that is **difficult and arduous**, but also possible.²³⁵

²³¹ cf. CCC # 294.

²³² cf. W.Beinert, *O Culto dos Santos Hoje*, p. 20.

²³³ ib., p. 27.

²³⁴ cf. ib., p. 32.

²³⁵ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, CF # 185.

c. A Few Theological and Spiritual Reflections: - Christian Holiness would have these dimensions:

[1] Trinitarian: The Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium* [# 41] presents the universal call to holiness: and this Holiness is the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit, is realized as the following of Jesus Christ, and consistent in obedience to the Will of the Father [48].

[2] Paschal: on the "birthday" of the saints [into heaven] the Church proclaims the Paschal mystery realized in them - what they suffered in Christ and how, like He, they are sanctified by it all.

[a] Anthropological: based on the history, sociology and psychology of each person.

[b] Christological: firmly rooted in the Person of Jesus Christ, in great openness to human beings of our time, as based in the reality of the Risen Christ, each person can attain supreme perfection. Jesus and human beings are united mutually in a radical and absolute manner: the humanity of man and the divinity of God are never eliminated, confused.²³⁶

[c] Soteriological, Redemptive: salvation is achieved uniquely "through Jesus Christ Our Lord, the true Son of God, in the unity of the Holy Spirit" - human beings are not separated among themselves, but rather they come together in Jesus Christ for their salvation.²³⁷

[d] Eucharistic

[3] Pneumatological: the Spirit of Christ is the principle of the sanctifying love of God and therefore, at the same time, it is what brings about the transformation of each one into Jesus Christ, through sanctifying each.²³⁸

[a] Biblical

[4] Ecclesial: Holiness is realized always in the Communion of saints and is salvation into the Communion of saints. A number of dimensions may be considered:

[a] Contemplative: [cf. SC 2; DV 8];

[b] Missionary

²³⁶ cf. Beinert, *O Culto dos Santos*, o.c., p.. 60.

²³⁷ cf. o.c., p. 83.

²³⁸ cf. o.c., p. 63.

[c] Liturgical: in the context of Worship and prayer. St. Thomas speaks of the saints in the context of prayer.²³⁹

[5] Mariological: Some theologians would place a tract on "Hagiology", the Theology of the Saints, as an Appendix, or Corollary, to Mariology: all are "saints", "holy" through her intercession.

d. Reflections: This question on the positioning of Saints in Theology: under Mariology; a part of Eschatology; Ecclesiology; Sacramentology; as part of the Theology of Grace: all are possible. These possibilities might show that it is a part of theology that perhaps should not be held either a section of an introductory course on Spirituality, but that in truth, Holiness is central to dogma. One solution might be rather than to separate a course on "Hagiology" it would be best to insert the ideal in various aspects of dogma, but that it should not be reduced to a marginal consideration.²⁴⁰

1.] There is a Christocentric Nature to Liturgy: and this is emphatically, Eucharistic - this offers to the ecclesial communities the natural place in which this theme could receive even greater light and insight.²⁴¹

2.] When the Liturgy proclaims its mystery to the Pilgrim Church across time, it does not pretend to proclaim this without any reference to the contemporary situation. It is totally inclined to be inclined, immersed in this world, and yet not a reality that would be absorbed by any one age. Beginning with the Incarnation, we know that God saves this world, not by passing above, and not ever being involved in it, but saves it from within, making use of weak human instruments inspired through the life of worship, even though these instruments are imperfect.²⁴²

3.] The saints are the exemplary realization of the Following/Imitation of Jesus Christ, in 'putting on His mind', concretized in a given lived situation and historical environment. The saints are those who live a profound experience of God the Father, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For this very reason they are the most effective witnesses of the Gospel, in the service of the Church - similar to the Virgin Mary, 'who pondered the Word of God in her heart' [cf. Lk 2:19, 52].

²³⁹ cf. Summa, II-II, q. 83, a. 11; cf. Beinert, *O Culto dos Santos*, o.c., p. 50.

²⁴⁰ cf. Beinert, *O Culto dos Santos*, o.c., p. 53.

²⁴¹ o.c., p. 55.

²⁴² o.c., p. 73.

e. The Spirituality of St. Gaspar Bertoni: seems to be a fusion of his historical reality with the grace of God. Reflecting on his life today, a few elements might be noted which indeed were for him a kind of "lived Stigmata", or wounds that he received in his lifetime, which transformed him through a most profound dedication on his part, in correspondence to his life of Grace.

1.] The Deaths of his own loved ones: from the age of nine, until he was 15. Five members of his family died, including his only and younger sister, Metilda, who was just two years old. This reality profoundly marked the heart of young Gaspar, giving him a sense of the fleeting nature of human life: "We do not have here a permanent home!"

2.] The Separation of his Parents: after these deaths, the father of young Gaspar unfortunately separated from his wife, abandoning her and his only son, and left behind just enough financial support just to eke out an existence. This separation, too, marked the boy with a profound love for his Mother - and, at the same time, with a more ready faith in Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Spouse of Joseph.

3.] Illness that remained throughout his entire Life: after these family sufferings, Fr. Bertoni never again enjoyed good, or robust health. He underwent numerous operations, and endured other sufferings. By his faith, hope and charity, Fr. Gaspar was able to transform all these sadness in a vibrant devotion for the Wounds as those of Christ, accepted on Calvary and retained in His resurrection.

4.] Apostolic Failure: not all of his endeavors were crowned with success - a number of times, his conduct life, his prayer and his great project undertaken in behalf of the Church. did not meet success.

5.] Finally, his Congregation of the sacred Stigmata at the Service of Bishops did not develop in his life-time. The community was founded in 1816 - and on the day of his death almost 37 years later, it did not have more than ten members.

f. However, the contribution that St. Gaspar Bertoni made in his time, remains to this day - he is a witness of holy abandonment to the Will of God, in the dedicated service of humanity. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni had the great intuition to unite his routine daily life into a sacrifice, uniting it to his Eucharistic celebration, which he celebrated each day, according to a principle suggested by St. Paul: My brothers, through the mercy of God make of your bodies [i.e., entire lives] a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God [cf. Rm 12: 1, ff. - the Latin word here for the bodily oblation, is **obsequium** according to the Latin Vulgate.

...

2. The Icon of the Living God: this would mean a 'door' to the Trinity, and a 'mirror' for Christianity. There are a few texts that might be cited in this regard:

Introduction: The authentic dignity of each person is in the image of God - a relationship, orientation toward God.

a. A Revealed Principle

God said: Let us make human beings according to our image and likeness.. God created humanity according to His image, in the image of God did He create man and woman He created them [cf. Gn 1:26, f.].

On the day God created Adam and Eve, He made them in the likeness of God [cf. Gn 5:1].

And He made them a little less than God, crowning him with glory and beauty [cf. Ps 8:6].

God created humanity in incorruptibility, and made all to His image in the likeness of His own nature [cf. Ws. 2:23].

He made them like Himself, He created them to His own image [cf. Si 17:3]

b. The Development of this Doctrine in the NT

1.] Humanity is indeed created in the image of God and of His glory [cf. 1 Co 11:7].

2.] Predestined in the image of Jesus Christ: we know that the entire creation groans and suffers the pain of birth in the present...we are saved in hope... those He knew beforehand, these He predestined, and they will be conform to the image of His Son [cf. Rm 8:22-29, passim]

And as we are marked in the image of the human person, so we will be drawn up in the image of the heavenly man [cf. 1 Co 15:49].

3.] This is all a progressive transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. And all of us with uncovered faces, we reflect as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are transfigured into His very image, each time more resplendent by the action of the Lord, Who is Spirit [cf. 2 Co 3:18].

c. Jesus Himself is a Window/the ICON of the Most Holy Trinity: He is the splendor of His glory the very breath of His being [cf. Heb 1:3]. - Jesus is the ICON of the Invisible God [cf. Col 1:15].

1.] ICON: is the First-Born: a fusion of wisdom and redemption.

2.] Wisdom: a divine capacity, special Gift.

3.] Soteriology: a new creation: if anyone is in Christ, he/she is a New Creation [cf. 2 Co 5: 17 +].

d. Jesus is indeed the Light, Mirror for Human Beings: In this He was the Life and the Life was the Light for human beings [cf. Jn 1:4] - For the rest what matters is not circumcision and being without circumcision, but to be a New Creature [cf. Ga 6:17] - In Him were created all things [cf. Col 1:16]. - It was all for the purpose of making in Himself but one new person [cf. Ep 2:15].

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St. Gaspar has left behind a note that might serve as a useful point of reflection in the regarding of ICONS, painting: We are all called to reproduce in ourselves the portrait of Jesus Christ.²⁴³ An Image/ ICON that was important to St. Gaspar was that of the Crucified, wounded Christ - in his Risen form as well, with His wounds evident on His body.

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3. A Central Biblical Ideal: the Poor of the Lord Whom He loves

Introduction: the Modern Times have studied poverty, both with alarm and with some hope from a variety of perspectives:

a. Ecology: some book titles: *The Terminal Generation*; *Limits to Growth*.

b. Economy: the concerns of the Pope: *Centesimus Annus*; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*

c. Missiology: the Documents of Puebla.²⁴⁴

d. Ascetics: St. Thomas Aquinas showed the bond between the Beatitude of Poverty and the Theological Virtue of Hope: Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for of such is the Reign of God [cf. Mt 5:5].

²⁴³ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, in: MP February 2, 1808.

²⁴⁴ cf. Part 4, Chapter I, nn. 1128-1165.

a. **The Anawim in the OT:**

1.] This is not merely an economic poverty, as is indicated in the Wisdom tradition: - the lazy hand makes one poor, the diligent arm enriches [cf. Pr 10:4].

2.] Injustice also leads to poverty: the impious move the boundary markers, they steal from the lowly shepherd - the poor of the land hide themselves - they go about nude for the lack of clothing, they have no covering to protect them from the cold [cf. Jb 24:2-12].

3.] Zephaniah saw it as a spiritual value: I will leave in your midst a poor and lowly people and will procure for them a refuge in the Name of Yahweh [cf. Zp 3:12].

a.] The Psalms offer descriptions of the OT "Poor" [cf. Ps 22:16; 34:2; 37:11; 69:33; 74:10; 149:4, etc.].

b.] The Prophets seek for justice for the *Anawim* [cf. Am 2:6, etc.].

c.] Isaiah notes that the poor are the "beloved of God" [cf. Is 49:13; 66:2].

4.] Some exemplary testimonies:

a.] Jeremiah:

[1] in his crisis of faith, or vocation, Lord God Sabbath, I will come to You and to You I expose my cause: why does the way of the impious prosper? [cf. Jr 11:18 - 12:6]. In truth, Lord, did I not serve You in the best possible manner: why is my suffering continual and my wound incurable which refuses to be healed. You are for me a deceptive stream [cf. Jr 15:10-17; Lm 3:17, ff.].

[2] His response is heroic hope: [cf. Lm 3:21, ff.] I will hand myself over to you [cf. Jr 15:18]. Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me, and I will be saved, because you are my Praise. You are my refuge in the day of tribulation [cf. Jr 17:14-18; 18:18-22; 20:7-18].

b.] Job: his were sufferings of various types and his response is abandonment to the wisdom of God:

[1] Invasion of Trials: I lived in tranquility when he struck me, held me by the nape of the neck. He made of me his anvil [cf. Jb 16:12] - The hand of God wounded me [cf. Jb 19:11-21].

[2] The Triumph of Faith: this is Job's final response - I confess that You can do all things, and that none of Your plan is frustrated [cf. Jb 42:2-6].

c.] Suffering Servant: cf. the Canticles, Is 41:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12].

[1] A Prophet, predestined by God, with a divine mission, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

[2] A Servant of God who would triumph from humiliations to glorification.

[3] A word of comfort for the weary.

[4] By His wounds, ours are cured [cf. Is 53:5; 1 P 2:22-24].

d.] The Poor Just Man of Wisdom [cf. Ws 2:10-20].

[1] The just man is not easy to take, he claims to be the Son of God.

[2] His life distinguishes him for the rest, his ways are different.

[3] He proclaims that the destiny of the just is happy.

[4] He underwent a shameful death, but he will be raised up.

e.] Anonymous Psalmists: Trusting in God

[1] Ps 35:10: Yahweh, who is equal to You in freeing the poor?

[2] Ps 69:30: As for me, poor and wounded, that Your salvation, o God, might protect me!

[3] Ps 74:21: that the poor and need might praise Your name!

[4] Ps 80:1: Incline Your ear, O Yahweh, listen to me, as I am poor and needy.

[5] Psalm 131: An image dear to Fr. Bertoni: as a child who has just been weaned - place your hope in the Lord, now and always.

[6] Ps 9-10: I rejoice and exult in You - He never shuts out the cry of the poor - the hope of the poor will never be frustrated.

f.] Ben Sirach [or, 'Ecclesiasticus'] he unites love for wisdom with love of the TORAH - full of fervor the Temple and its ceremonies - he knows to the depths the sacred books: he offers the instruction of Wisdom personally to all those who seek it. A fundamental principle of Sirach is Fear of the Lord. He offers a meditation on Sacred History - this is the ultimate testimony of Jewish Wisdom in Palestine: My son, if you dedicate yourself to serve the Lord, prepare for an ordeal [cf. Si 2:1] - The fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction, its vesture would be faith and meekness [cf. Si 1:27] - The more important you become, so much the more humble yourself [cf. Si 3:17-19]. - Incline Your ear to the poor and respond to him with salvation, with affability [cf. Si 4:8]. - Whether rich or poor, each one's glory is the fear of the Lord - it is not just to disdain a poor man who is intelligent - no one is greater than the one who fears the Lord [cf. Si 10:20-24].

g.] King David: he is remembered as "poor" for three reasons [incidentally, the word **anaw** appears 69 time in the Psalms - and 35 of these times are interference to David]:

[1] Unjust Persecutions

[a] On the Part of Saul [1 S 18:1-31:13].

[b] His own son, Absalom [cf. 2 S 13:1-19:9].

[2] The Deaths of those He loved:

[a] His Elegy for Soul and Jonathan [cf. 2 S 1:17-27].

[b] The death of his son from Bathsheba [cf. 2 S 19:1-9].

[c] The death of his unfaithful son, Absalom [cf. 1 S 19:1-9].

[3] His own personal sin: To You, O Lord, I will confess my iniquity [cf. Ps 32:5] - Have mercy on me, O lord...The Canticle of the New Creation [cf. Ps 51]: Have mercy on me - I recognize my transgressions - purify me from my sin - O God, create in me a pure heart, renew and firm spirit within me.

Conclusion

The characteristics of *Anawim* of the OT:

- accept the Will of God, working for a better world;
- offering the Messiah to the world [cf. Is 61:1, ff.; Zc 9:9; Ps 22].
- purified in his own life - committed to on-going conversion [intellectual, moral, psychological, religious];
- the characteristic virtues of the *Anawim* : faith, hope, humility, obedience, love;
- a self-giving for others
- an abandonment in God.

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b. The *Anawaim* in the NT

1.] John the Baptist: the central principle of his life which he has left for the Church: He must increase, while I decrease [cf. Jn 3:30].

a.] According to the Synoptics: He is presented as living the Ascetical Life, ending in Martyrdom

John came neither eating or drinking and wisdom was justified through the works of the Son of Man [cf. Mt 11:28] .

John the Baptist was in the desert proclaiming a Baptism of Conversion for the remission of sins [cf. Mk 1:4]. - The king sent the executioner with the order to cut off John's head [cf. Mk 6:17-29].

He will be great before the Lord, he will neither drink wine nor any strong drink; he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will convert many [cf. Lk 1:16]. - He lived in desert places until that day in which he was manifest to Israel [cf. Lk 1:80]. - He went throughout the entire region of the Jordan, proclaiming a Baptism for the conversion from sin [cf. Lk 3:3]. - I will baptize with water, but one will come who is greater than I and I am not worthy to loosen the strap of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire [cf. Lk 3:16].

b.] According to the 4th Gospel: he is presented here John the Evangelist as a "Witness", and "Friend of the Spouse"

No one can attribute to himself anything that was not bestowed on him from heaven [cf. Jn 3:27].

I am not the Christ, but I was sent on ahead of Him [v. 28]. - I am the Friend of the Spouse who is present and I rejoice at the sound of his voice - this is that my joy might be complete [cf. v. 29] He gives witness of what he saw and heard [v. 31] - the one that God has sent speaks only His words and the gift of the Holy Spirit is in truth beyond measure [v. 34]. - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life [v. 36].

2.] The Holy Spouses, Mary & Joseph: their Holy espousals are a message of Holy Abandonment in the Stigmatine tradition:

a.] According to the Synoptics:

[1] A Royal Mission: Mary is the Mother of Jesus, Son of King David [cf. Mk 1:6, ff.].

[2] Priestly Mission: she was the cousin of Elizabeth, wife [and daughter?] of a priest [cf. Lk 1:36].

[3] Prophetic Mission: I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to His Word [cf. Lk 1:38].

b.] According to the 4th Gospel: her Message of Cana and Calvary, her only appearances in John's Gospel [cf. cc. 2; 19]: The **New Covenant** is an espousals, a union of divine mercy and human mercy. Mary's Message is what she lived: You do whatever He tells you! Woman, behold your Son!. Mary's message to the Diaconal Church: His mother said to the servants [*diakono*] do all that he tells you [cf. Jn 2:5; Ga 4:55]. This is the Formula of the Old Covenant of Sinai - prayed in the Lord's own Prayer and is the lived message of the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane.

c.] Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Redemptoris Custos*, August 15, 1989 [cf. ## 1-4; 17-21; 30]: To God Who reveals Himself there is due the obedience of faith [cf. Rm 16:26, ff.; 1:5; 2 Co 10:5-6] - the man freely commits one's entire life to God, offering to God the Revealer the full submission [*obsequium*] of intellect and will, and freely giving assent to the revelation made by Him [cf. DV 5]. Joseph acted in conformity to the angel of the Lord who had ordered him - Joseph's Annunciation [cf. Mt 1:24].

[1] A Message of Holy Abandonment

He was called to protect the Redeemer and Joseph did as the Angel of the Lord ordered him to do, and he took Mary as his wife [cf. Mt 1:24] - To Joseph, God entrusted the care of His most precious treasures and he served in an exemplary

manner - The Messenger of God revealed to him the special plan of God in his regard [cf. RC # 2].

There exists a close analogy between the Annunciation in the text of St. Matthew [cf. 1:20, ff.] and the text of St. Luke [cf. 1:38]. Let it be done according to God's Word, and Joseph showed such an availability of will, similar to that availability of Mary in that order which God sent to him by means of His messenger [cf. RC # 3].

The marriage of Mary with Joseph is an indivisible union of two souls, two hears, in the consent that was a virginal and holy union [cf. RC # 7].

In the unfolding of his life which was a pilgrimage of faith, Joseph as Mary, remained faithful to the end: He did just as the angel of the Lord ordered him to do [cf. Mt 1:24] [cf. RC # 17].

The fact that Mary was espoused with Joseph is included within the very design of God - there was a special confirmation of the spousal bond - Joseph was obedient to the Spirit [cf. RC ## 18, 19].

The total sacrifice of himself, Joseph expresses his generous love for the Mother of God, making to her the spousal gift of himself - he respected her condition of belonging exclusively to God [cf. RC # 20].

The total sacrifice that Joseph made of his entire existence finds its adequate motivation in his profound interior life: this implied the total disposition of committing his own freedom to the plans of God... this submission to God, which is the readiness of will to dedicate himself to those things that relate to His service, is no more than the exercise of devotion which constituted one of the expressions of the virtue of religion [cf. RC # 26].

The fundamental attitude of the entire Church ought to be one of religious listening to the Word of God [cf. DV 1] or, an absolute availability for the service of the salvific will of God, revealed in Jesus...Paul VI exhorted a spontaneous theological reflection on the espousals of the divine action with human activity in the great economy of redemption [cf. RC # 30].

[2] A Message of Courage:

Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God [cf. Lk 1:30].

Joseph, son of David, do not fear to receive Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit [cf. Mt 1:29].

[3] A Message of Joy:

Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you '[cf. Lk 1:28]

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God [cf. Lk 1:46, ff.].

You will bring forth a Son and you will call Him by the name of Jesus for He will save His people from their sins [cf. Mt 1:21]

Conclusion: The mystery of the Holy Espousals constitutes the central nucleus of the Stigmatine vocation, which is the spirit of Holy Abandonment.²⁴⁵

The abandonment of Fr. Bertoni in the service of the Church was powerfully nourished in the Spousal Model of Christ with His Church, lived visibly by Mary and Joseph in the Mystery of their espousals. Mary and Joseph are models of abandonment in the following of the Will of God. In them may be seen the vital communion of the relationship of the total gift of self in the overcoming of the limits of human nature.²⁴⁶

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4. Jesus Christ, One of the Anawim: The Kenosis of Jesus Christ according to St. Paul [cf. Ph 2:5-11]:

a. Literary Form:

1.] A Liturgy, a Canticle:

a.] Dogmatic: this hymn presents the various stages of the existence of Jesus Christ: His divine "pre-existence" [cf. Jn 1:1, ff., etc.] - His life-long self-emptying: Incarnation and Redemption] - His Glorification [and universal Adoration].

b. Moral-Ethical: Imitations [according to St. Paul]; or, the Following of Christ [according to the Synoptics] of Jesus Christ - putting on His "mind".

c.] Various NT Canticles:

[1] Vocal Prayers [cf. Col 3:126; 5:19; Jas 5:13].

[2] Sacramental [cf. Ep 5:14; Tt 3:4-7];

[3] Meditations [cf. Ep 1:3-14; Rm 8:31-39; 1 Co 13];

²⁴⁵ cf. Fr. Joseph Stofella, CSS, in: CS III, pp. 361, 368.

²⁴⁶ cf. Fr. Jose' Alberto Moura, CSS, *The Holy Spirit in the Charism of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni*, pp. 146-149.

[4] Confessions [cf. 1 Tm 6:11-16; 2 Tm 2:11-13];

[5] Christological [cf. Heb 1:1-4; Col 1:15-20; Jn 1:1-14; 1 P 1:18-22; 2:21-25; 3:18-21; Ph 2:5-11].

d.] A Canticle of Baptism

1.] Victory over the tyranny of evil [cf. Rm 8:15, 21, 38, ff.; Ga 4:1; 5:1; Col 1:12-15; 2:8-15, 20; Ac 10:38; Ap 1:18, ff.]'

2.] In the Name of Jesus

3.] Baptized INTO [progressively] into Christ Jesus. [cf. Rm 6:1, ff.];

4.] A gradual transformation [cf. Rm 8:2; 1 Co 5:17 +: the "New Creation"];

5.] A Remembrance, "Memorial" for all of life.

e.] A Eucharistic Hymn:

1.] The supreme form, the lowest kind of **kenosis**: the Eucharist.

2.] When you come together, each of you can sing a hymn, a canticle, or a revelation [cf. 1 Co 14:26].

2.] A Profession of Faith:

a.] Jesus of Nazareth, the Galilean - is the "Lord"!
b.] The adoration of the Universe.
c.] The historical Christ is God and man, in the unity of His divine personality.

d.] The mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation.

e.] A doxology.

f.] Jesus is a Person FOR others: for the Father, for other humans.

g.] This is a "mini-Christology", a synopsis, a capsule.

h.] This is a Creedal Formula in the resurrection [cf. 1 Co 15].

i.] A Ritual of Enthronement

j.] A chanted Creed.

3.] A Confession of Hope: Let us continue to affirm our hope for the One Who made the promise is faithful [cf. Heb 10:23].

a.] This hymn is a response to apathetic polytheism, in the midst of the astral gods.

b.] The "Book of Consolation" [cf. Is 40-55] presents Yahweh "supra-cosmic" {He is enthroned above the circle of the earth - cf. Is 40:23}.

c.] The Hymn is about Jesus' eventual triumph over the universe.

d.] This is a "tri-nome" of totality: on the earth, under the earth, the entire cosmos.

e.] The spiritual world: the adoration of the saints in the heavens: the faithful on earth; those in heaven - and even the demons, under the earth.

f.] An anticipation of the praise at the end of time.

g.] The extension of the Lordship of Jesus.

Conclusion:

[1] Do not be afraid - the Lord is with you!

[2] This hymn is the promise of eventual, total, final victory.

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b. An Analysis of the Hymn:

v. 5: Have in yourselves the same sentiments that were in Christ Jesus: what are these?

1.] Fraternal Humility? - judge each one as superior to yourself [cf. Ph 2:3].

2.] The human obedience of Jesus? - the mystery of the Incarnation?

3.] The Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity? In this sense, that the "obedience" of Jesus is a revelation of that eternal love in God, distinguishing Jesus from the Father [cf. Col 1:15; Heb 1:3; Jn 12:45; 14:9].

a.] The Radical Poverty of St. Francis of Assisi.

b.] The total **nada** of St. John of the Cross.

c.] The **total obsequium** of St. Gaspar Bertoni.

- 4.] It is all OF Jesus Christ: a union, sharing in His divine Personality:
 - a.] Living Stones in the spiritual edifice [cf. 1 P 2:5].
 - b.] The true vine and branches, its fruit [cf. Jn 15:1, ff.].
 - c.] The nuptial theme: this is a great mystery [cf. Ep 5:25-32].
 - d.] The Mystical Body [cf. Ep 5:31; 1 Co 12:12 +].
- 5.] A Sacramental Interpretation = Incorporation/Communion.
- 6.] A "Participation" - that you might share in the divine nature [cf. 2 P 1:4].

v. 6: He was in the divine condition:

- 1.] Divine pre-existence [cf. Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3; Jn 1:1, ff; 5:18; 10:33].
- 2.] True God: Eternal divine Filiation - also born of Mary, and our filiation: he did not cling to His equality with God - a negative proposition;
 - a.] Divine "Humility"
 - b.] Precisely here, is Jesus' Constitutional Filiation, His central, fundamental interior, eternal disposition.

v. 7: His human condition: but he **empties Himself** - his **kenosis** - this is the positive proposition]:

- 1.] His "self-emptying", not of His Divinity, or of His essential divine attributes - but, He sacrificed his eternal glory which He possessed in His pre-existence [cf. Jn 17:5] - and which transfigured His humanity, as at His Transfiguration - cf. Mt 17:1-8. p.]
- 2.] His redemptive self-emptying: immediately there poured forth blood and water [cf. Jn 19:31, ff.].

He assumed **the condition of a slave**: in His Incarnation, Christ assumed the path of submission, obedience.

He took on **Human Likeness**: Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. [cf. Heb 2:17] - He was like us in all things, save sin [cf. Heb 4:15] - He was indeed the Son of God, and learned obedience through suffering [cf. Heb 5:8].

He assumed the figure of Man: Behold the Man [this is what ADAM looks like after scourging, an expression of the sins of humanity - the Woman of Samaria maintained: there is a "Man "...I wonder? [a kind of biblical "Dorian Gray"]].

v. 8: He humbled Himself and was obedient unto death, and death on the Cross.

1.] His divine "Obedience" - the central "sentiment", choice of will, of Jesus - his acceptance of the Precept of His Father - not only of the precept [this would be "obedience", but also the Person of the other [charity]: this is what distinguishes Him as a divine Person.

2.] Obedience of Faith [cf. DV 5]

a.] This is to God Who reveals, a full *obsequium* of intellect and will.

b.] To praise His name, the obedience of Faith [cf. Rm 1:5] - given to make known to all people in order to lead them to the obedience of faith [cf. Rm 16:26].

c.] Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ [cf. 2 Co 10:5, ff.].

d.] There is an obedience due to the gospel message - but, what is intended here is the identification of adherence to the faith [cf. Ac 6:7; Rm 6:16, ff.; 10:16; 16:19, 26; 1 Th 1:8; 1 P 1:22; Heb 5:9; 11:8].

e.] An imitation of the central disposition of Jesus to His Father.

f.] A privileged imitation of Jesus Christ: by means of each one's *kenosis*, each would hand himself over totally to God [cf. DV 5; Ga 2:16-20; 3:22].

v. 9: The Third stage, Condition of Christ: His exaltation, resurrection, ascension: Therefore, God exalted Him greatly.

1.] The Resurrection is a work, par excellence, of the power of God [cf. Rm 4:1+].

2.] This is a profession of the ecclesial faith of Christianity [cf. Rm 10:9; 1 Co 12:3, ff.].

3.] This is the formula for the New Creation: to be crucified together with Jesus Christ [cf. Ga 2:19, ff.] - whoever is in Christ, is a new creature [cf. 2 Co 5:17; Col 1:15-20; Ga 6:15; Ep 2:15; cf. Rm 6:4 +]. - this is to create in one sole new

man [cf. Ep 2:15] - the body is one, even though there are many members, we are all baptized into one Spirit to be one Body: if one member suffers, then all the members share in his/her suffering [cf. 1 Co 12:12-27].

Conclusion

With St. Ignatius, St. Gaspar Bertoni frequently mentions the Glory of God in his Original Constitutions:

- for the glory of God [cf. CF # 133];
- for the greater glory of God and better service of the Church [cf. CF # 125];
- for the exclusive glory of God [cf. CF # 219];
- so that everyone might collaborate for the greater glory of God [cf. CF # 259].

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5. The Synoptic Gospels

a. The salvific Mystery of Christ's Temptations

Introduction

- [1] Jesus' temptations are included among His central works.
- [2] These manifest one aspect of the *kenosis* of Christ.
- [3] Jesus assumes human sufferings and redeems them.

1.] Mk 1:12-13: Christ as Victor:

The Spirit drove Him out into the desert - He was in the desert 40 days, and was tempted by Satan - He lived among the wild beasts, and the angels served Him.

a.] There are only two verses: the key to the interpretation:

- no one can enter the house of a strong man to rob his belongings [cf. 3:27].

b.] The desert is an image of Gethsemane [cf. 14:32-42] - a Promise:

c.] The Lord of all:

- the angels serve him.

- He was among the wild beasts the serpent and the child; the wolf and the lamb [cf. Is 11].

- Dominion over all evil.

- The decisive battle is won in the desert.

- This is the heart of Jesus' Mission.

- The initial victory is followed by a variety of cures: Peter's Mother-in-law; the leper; a paralytic [reference to sin]; expulsion of an impure spirit [cf. Mk 5].

2.] Mt. 4:1-11: Christ, the Genuine, Faithful Israel

- 40 days and 40 nights, as Israel of old, 40 years [cf. Dt 8:2, 4; Nb 14:34].

- the format: a discussion among the scribes: citing the OT.

- The radical temptation: IF you are the Son of God [cf. 4:3, 6].

- Bread from heaven: My Food is the Father's Will [cf. Jn 4:34]

- In the Holy City, on the Temple pinnacle, the sin of Israel changed by Jesus' victory - a spiritual Reign, interior.

- On the high mountain: Sinai, the Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Ascension: Universal Dominion.

3.] Lk 4:1-13: Christ, the New Adam:

- Geographical Concerns with the Holy City: Jerusalem!

- New Adam [cf. Rm 5:12; 1 Co 15:22].

By means of one man, sin entered the world, and through sin, death - because of one man's sin, all die. How much greater is the outpouring of God's grace through one sole man, Jesus Christ [cf. Rm 5:15, ff.].

All die in Adam, and in Christ all will receive life [cf. 1 Co 15:22].

- the sin of Adam transformed the garden into a desert - the sufferings of Jesus in the desert, translate it back into a Garden: a New Creation.

- after he had exhausted all the means of tempting Him, the Devil departed [cf. Lk 4:13]

- the temptation of each one becomes a part of the mystery of redemption.

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b. The Mystery of Jesus' Prayer:

Introduction:

- [[1] Jesus offers a prayer of His own: Our Father [**Abba!**] [cf. Mt 6:3-13].
- [2] Prayer is the expression of love, hope, charity, faith.
- [3] This is an eschatological prayer for all time, prior to His second coming.
 - 1.] **ABBA** - a family intimacy - equal to the Father, but prays to Him.
 - a.] This is a dialogue on the supreme level.
 - b.] A sanctification of the divine name.
 - c.] An essential prayer of the Church.
 - d.] Total intimacy, and earlier fear.
 - e.] A letter from the Holy Spirit

The Spirit comes to assist our weakness, when we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit prays within us [cf. Rm 8: 26, ff.]

- f.] A filial form of prayer

- 2.] **FIAT** as instruction: and then a lived expression in Gethsemane.

- the Incarnate Word of the Father: Jesus is the **obsequium** to His Father - He did not spare His own Son, but offered Him up [cf. Rm 8:32].

- Jesus is the Father's personal **obsequium** - God so loved the Lord that He handed over His only Son, so that those who would believe in Him, will have eternal life. [cf. Jn 3:16].

- 3.] Christ prays to His heavenly Father [cf. the General Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours, n. 3].

- to communicate to human God's own life, the Word proceeds from the Father as a High Priest;

- The praise of God resounds in Christ's heart with human expressions of adoration, propitiation, intercession;

- Jesus is one with the Father, and said: I am coming, O god, to do Your will! [cf. Heb 10:9; Jn 6:58].

- He is the exemplar of Prayer: His entire life, from its inauguration until His death.

- His activity of each day is bound to His prayer: in the desert, on the mountain, rising up early in the morning, and remaining at prayer through the entire night.

4.] The Church continues the Prayer of Jesus Christ

- each person needs to confess his/her dependence before the Creator;
- prayer of necessity needs to be connected to that of Jesus Christ'
- Christian prayer incorporates within itself the human community.

Conclusion

The thought of St. Gaspar Bertoni might be summarized in this manner:²⁴⁷

[1] The Congregation has for its purpose to hand on to others only what has been contemplated²⁴⁸.

[2] When one does not offer his prayer well beforehand, he will not be able to speak well of God later²⁴⁹.

[3] The active life alone is not sufficient then to serve Christ; there is necessary the help of contemplation²⁵⁰.

c. The Salvific Mystery of Gethsemane

Introduction: there are various theories concerning its fundamental meaning:

[1] Sadness, anguish, fear for His impending death.

[2] Radical Abandonment of the Son on the part of the Father - His specially chosen Apostles.

[3] A "Messianic Trial", of sublime mystery - a revelation of the Trinity?: - He was wounded by God, and humiliated [cf. Is 53:4] - strike the shepherd and the flock will be dispersed - I will turn My hand against the little ones [cf. Zc 13: 7, ff.; Jb 19:11-21].

²⁴⁷ cf. Jose' Alberto Moura, CSS, *The Holy Spirit in the Charism of Gaspar Bertoni*, pp. 231, ff.

²⁴⁸ cf. Original Constitutions, CF ## 49; 272.

²⁴⁹ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, in: MP, February 4, 1809.

²⁵⁰ cf. Mss B # 8787.

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1.] Mk 14:32-42: Jesus Christ is the SON OF GOD:

I will strike the Shepherd [14:14] - My soul is saddened unto death [v. 34] - why have You abandoned Me [cf. 15:34; Ps 22].

a.] "Abandonment" not in the literal, "ontological" sense, against J.; Moltmann - but, a kind of mystical, dark night.

b.] A Suffering Servant, the Poor Man of Ps 22 - which comes to a close in a Hymn of Hope: God does not disdain the poverty of the poor [cf. St. John Chrysostom].

c/] Rejected by men: He was saddened by the hardness of heart [cf. 3:5] - He was amazed at their lack of faith [cf. 6:6] - He sighed profoundly [cf. 8:11] - alas, my friend, in whom I trusted, who ate bread with me...! [cf. Ps 41:10].

d.] The lack of comprehension of His closest disciples [cf. 4:13 +].

e.] The "blue-print" for Gethsemane and the denials was in the previous chapter: watch, therefore, because you do not know when the lord of the house will return: in the evening [the Last Supper]; at mid-night [Gethsemane]; and cock-crow [Peter's denials], or the morning [Jesus before the Sanhedrin].

• • •

2.] Mt 28:36-46: Lessons for Discipleship

a. ***Fiat:*** Jesus' [Mary's] own central disposition - this is My Body/Blood, handed over/poured out **for you** - so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled [cf. Mt 26:54, f.; cf. 1:22; 2:15, 17; 3:4, 14; 13:55] - all was done, following the Father's Will [cf. Mt 7:21; 12:50; 21:31].

b. The Good shepherd: I was sent for the lost sheep of Israel [cf. Mt 15:24; Zc 13:7].

c. Implications for the faithful servant in the Church: Stay here, while I go there to pray [cf. 26: 36; cf. Gn 22:5, ff.: Abraham said to his servants: stay here, and I and the boy will go there, we will adore and return to you... But, where is the lamb for the holocaust? Abraham responded: It is God Who will provide the lamb for the holocaust...]

- Jesus is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh [cf. Mt 8:17; 12:18-21] ;

- He is Daniel's Son of Man [cf. Mt 24:10; 15:21;

- there are lessons here in this "fulfillment" theme: remain, come with Me; Peter sinned because he was "at a distance."

• • •

3.] Lk 22:39-46: The Drops of Blood, the New Creation

a.] This is the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, of women, prayer, the poor, sinners.

b.] The angel appeared to Him, and ministered to Him.

c.] His sweat was like **drops [embolia]** with the precision of a pathologist [was Luke a doctor?]

d.] **Agonia** a profound sadness for the things of God [cf. 2 M 3:21; Dn 1:10, Esther - the agony of athletics [cf. 1 Co 9:24, ff.; Ph 3:12, ff.; 2 Tm 2:5].

e.] He prayed with greater intensity.

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6. St. John and the Sacred Stigmata, Sorrowful AND Glorious

Introduction

[1] You sent Me into the world, as I sent them into the world, and for them I consecrate Myself, so that they might be consecrated in truth [cf. 17:16, f.].

[2] One of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance and immediately there flowed blood and water [cf. 19:34; 1 Jn 5:6; cf. LG 3; SC 5].

[4] All will see Him, even those who have pierced Him [cf. Rv 1:7].

• • •

a. **The Pierced One: the Wounded Heart, Spouse:** John and the Prophet Deutero-Zechariah:

1.] On that day there will be a great lamentation in Jerusalem as happened on the Plains of Megiddo as for the pierced one, there were lamentation and weeping as over a first-born [cf. Zc 12:10, ff.] - what are these wounds in your breast? The sword will be raised up against my Shepherd [cf. Zc 13:7, ff.] - On that day there will be for the House of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem a stream to wash away sin and stain [cf. Zc 13:1, ff.].

Is this 'biographical' for 'goo' King Josiah? [cf. 2 K 23:28-30; 2 Ch 35:19-27; Jr 22:10, 15, 18; Lm 2:1-3; cf. Si 49:1-4].

2.] The "Pierced One" and the Lamb of God, Spouse of the Church :

- As a Holocaust [Redemption, Expiation, New Creation];
- As a Servant [cf. Jr 11:19; Is 53:4,f; 1 P 1:19];
- As a Shepherd [cf. Rv 6:16, f.; 7:17; cf. Ezk 34; Jn 10].

b. The Glorious Wounds: Paschal Faith and the Apostolic Mission

1.] Four Encounters:

- The Disciple whom Jesus loved: he saw and believed [cf. 20:8].
- Mary Magdalene: the first Witness of the resurrection [vv. 11-18].
- The Disciples with the doors closed [cf. vv. 19-23: **Open the Doors to the Redeemer!**
- Thomas and conversion to Paschal Faith - transformed into an Apostolic Missionary of Paschal faith.

2.] Three Gifts

- The Holy Spirit
- Pardon
- The Apostolic Mission: Peace be to you! Having said this, He showed them His hands and His side... AS the Father has sent Me, now I send you...! [cf. Jn 19:19, ff.].



CONCLUSION

Two Saints: Ignatius of Loyola and Gaspar Bertoni and the Stigmatine Response: *Obsequium*

A reading of the Constitutions of the Stigmatine Founder

An Imitation/Following of Christ, a Putting on of the Mind of Christ Jesus

[1] **The Biblical Aspect: the Loving, Filial Obedience of Jesus of His Father**

A new priesthood, holy to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ [cf. 1 P 2:4, ff.]

Offer your bodies as a living oblation to the Mercy of God [cf. Rm 12:1, ff.]

And for Him we say AMEN to God for His glory [cf. 1 Co 1:20].

Jesus, the High Priest, merciful - His function is to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin [cf. Heb 5;1-10]

For this He came into this world, and stated: I have come to do Your will [cf. Heb 10:7, ff.].

[cf. especially Jn's presentation of Jesus' unique relationship to His Father]:

The Father who sent Me [cf. Jn 8].

For this the Father loves Me, because I give My life to take it up again. I have the power to hand it over - the Father consecrated Me and sent Me into the world [cf. Jn 10].

Obsequium: the relationship of Jesus to His Father, and the Christian to God.

[2] **The Magisterium of the Church: a Definition, Description of Faith**

[The Council of Trent, quoted, then, by Vatican II]

To the God Who reveals there is due the 'obedience of faith' [cf. Rm 16:26; 2 Co 10:5, f] - hence, the believer hands himself over totally to God who reveals in the full ***obsequium*** of intellect and will [cf. DV 1; 5]. ***Obsequium*** is part of the Act of Faith.

It is a religious submission [***obsequium***] in faith [cf. LG 25]. Hence, ***obsequium*** indicates obedience in the Church.

[3] **St. Thomas Aquinas**

Obsequium indicates the relationship of Jesus Christ with His Father - and also the Religious Vows - Jesus began to wash the feet of His disciples, offering this **obsequium** of humility to His Father.²⁵¹

4. **St. Ignatius of Loyola**

In Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions, the theme is: ***De Missionibus Summi Pontificis*** - and this corresponds to **Part IX** of the Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni: ***De Gradu Professorum***.

a. The Ignatian Definition of the Apostolic Mission:

"... The Missions are those Apostolic expeditions, undertaken by order of the Supreme Pontiff or the Superiors of the Society, for the greater glory of God and the assistance of souls, and usually outside the places of our residences."²⁵²

b. The Ignatian Law: ***ad maiorem*** - an ever 'greater' abandonment to God, the Church. A similarity with the Franciscan OFM: the ever **lesser** Friars. For St. Ignatius, the over-riding principle remains: **For the Greater Glory of God:**²⁵³

- greater necessities;
- greater disposition, devotion, suitability;
- a more universal good, more divine, more spiritual.²⁵⁴

c. ***Obsequium Romani Pontificis***

- ***maius Dei et Domini nostri obsequium et animarum profectum... magnus divinae gloriae aut obsequi proventus speratur...***²⁵⁵

- ***intentio quarti voti;***²⁵⁶

- ***maius Dei obsequium mittere cogitaret;***²⁵⁷

- ***ad maius Dei et Sedis Apostolicae obsequium fore;***²⁵⁸

²⁵¹ cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium Joannis*, c. 12, Lectio 2.

²⁵² cf. Epitome to the Jesuit Constitutions, # 612.

²⁵³ cf. Jesuit Constitutions, # 622.

²⁵⁴ Jesuit Constitutions, Part VI, Chapter

²⁵⁵ ib. # 603.

²⁵⁶ ib. # 605.

²⁵⁷ ib. # 608.

²⁵⁸ ib. # 609.

- *ad Dei obsequium ... ad huiusmodi missiones aptiores;*²⁵⁹
- *ut in omnibus ad Dei et Sedis Apostolicae obsequium utilis...missionibus Summi Pontificis iuvare poterit: ut melius quod ad Christ Domini obsequium quaeritur...;*²⁶⁰
- *in Christi Domini nostri obsequium;*²⁶¹
- *principalius missionis atque intentionis Summi Pontificis... obsequii posthabebit... sine detrimento missionis...;*²⁶²
- *Societatis peculiari voto circa missiones ad Dei gloriam se obstrinxit...*²⁶³

[For St. Ignatius, **obsequium** indicates that Apostolic Service rendered to the Roman Pontiff and it is the content of the Fourth Vow].

[According to Fr. Lenotti, the second Successor of the Stigmatine Founder, there is this analogy: as the Jesuits are directed toward the Pope, so the Stigmatines are the Bishops:

- *quocumque in Dioecesi et mundo;*
- *ministerium Dei Verbum quodcumque;*
- *gratis omnino.*

[As has been noted, this is a Geographic, Apostolic, Personal and of the Personnel for the entire Congregation].

[5] The Law of "Progress" built into St. Gaspar Bertoni's Constitutions: largely, through the use of comparatives: **more than ordinary, common, than others.**

- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Apostolic, Missionary. CF # 6: one's own spiritual perfection;
the perfect dominion over the ecclesiastical sciences.

CF # 7: Even to the highest grade of the Priestly Ministry, assuming the Apostolic Mission.

²⁵⁹ ib. # 611

²⁶⁰ ib. # 614.

²⁶¹ ib. # 615.

²⁶² ib. # 616.

²⁶³ ib. # 617.

Part IV: [Progressive Formation]a. SPIRITUAL

CF # 47: The first means is Prayer, common prayer; divine office, meditation, reading, examen, spiritual exercises, confession, manifestation of one's defects to the Superior.

CF \$ 48: The second means is a diligent commitment through purification, in making the virtues grow, in renunciation, in observing the precepts: making every effort to occupy oneself in that is related to Ecclesiastical Ministry.

b. INTELLECTUAL

CF # 49: Our finality is not only to contemplate in itself, but also to hand on to others the truths contemplated.

CF # 56: All this [academic perfection] pertains to the Congregation as a whole, or in the totality of its membership. For the whole Congregation it is necessary that there be perfection in the above noted disciplines and languages - in the Body of the Congregation, this would very well be achieved. This means that there is required in each one of its members an authentic excellence in all the Disciplines.

c. APOSTOLIC: cf. Part V: The Promotion of the Confreres

CF # 76: Finally, they will be charged with directing the Missions, and being dedicated with all means to the salvation of souls.

Part IX: The Grade of the Professed

CF # 158: To the **Profession** may be admitted only those priests to whom the government of the Congregation pertains. They are called **carry out the most important ministries**, and these demand the priestly dignity.

6. A Brief Reflection on the Part of the Stigmatine Founder and His Use of the Singular and the Plural to describe the Apostolic Mission: Mission/Missions; OBSEQUIIUM/ OBSEQUIA:²⁶⁴

a. In the Singular:

CF # 7: the members are to be promoted to the highest grade of the priestly ministry, assuming the Apostolic Mission.

²⁶⁴ This study is more complete in the reflection on Fr. Francis Suárez, SJ and the Original Constitutions of the Stigmatine Founder.

CF # 48: striving to occupy themselves assiduously in all that is related to the apostolic ministry.

CF # 62: to use that balance in studies so that all might dedicate enough time to study and to the cultivating of languages and sciences, and everything for the service of the Church [*in Ecclesiae obsequium*].

CF # 125: in studies, as in everything, all is for the greater glory of God and the greater service of the Church [*et ecclesiae maius obsequium*].

CF # 163: ***Verbi Dei Quodcumque Ministerium***

CF # 195: this is the principal point of charity and the mutual offering of service [*se invicem obsequio*].

CF # 255: the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls.

b. In the Plural:

CF # 57: with special study to be able to conduct the different ministries [*ad varia Ecclesiae obsequia*] in behalf of the Church, always in harmony with the diversity of times and circumstances.

CF # 158: the function is to conduct the more important ministries.

CF # 162: beseeching God by means of the celebrations of Holy Masses, that the preaching [*implorantes fructus missionum*] and the confessions might achieve the desired fruit.

CF # 182: not only to teach the fundamental, or useful truths with a view to eternal life, by means of the preaching, ministries, teaching class - but also through communicating even the very rudiments of the faith - the Oratories, teaching catechism...

CF # 185: since the scope of our Congregation is to serve the Church through the multiple ministries proper to her vocation [*obsequium praestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera*] - we do not seek on our own to go to this, rather than to some other place or to assume this or that activity, in accord with our own personal choices. Rather each will try to be in harmony with the directives of the Bishop...

CF # 262: Since the scope of our Congregation is the salvation of souls, there is demanded of its members the practice of **proportionate ministries** to achieve this end: the first apostolate is the spiritual well being of one's own confreres.

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Section Three

The Divine Indwelling: The Source and Scope of the Apostolic Mission

Joseph Henchey, CSS

[The English original of an article published in Italian]

L'inabitazione divina: sorgente e scopo della Missione Apostolica
in:

Compendio di teologia spirituale in onore di Jordan Aumann, OP

Roma: PUST 1992, pp. 121-142]

[Translated into Italian by Fr. Giorgio MARCATO, OP]

Introduction

Following the Consistory of March 13, 1989, the date for the Canonization of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni - [Priest of the Diocese of Verona, Italy, and Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred stigmata of our Lord Jesus Christ] - was set for All Saints' day of the same year. The beatification was celebrated on the same date in the Holy Year of 1975. These "honors of the altar" are the culmination of a life that began on October 9, 1777, and which came to a close in Verona on June 12, 1853, in Verona.

Born into a family of Notaries, his early years were lived in a relatively well-to-do setting. However, a series of events gradually unfolded in his life that had profound effects on the work of grace developing within him:

- deaths of his loved ones, including his only sister;
- the periodic and then definitive separation of his parents;
- ill health that plagued his life;
- aspects of the apostolate that did not succeed, due either to hostile civil laws, or to the lack of acceptance;
- his religious family which did not fully develop in his own life-time: at the time of his death, 37 years after its foundation, the community numbered only a handful of members.

From his first year in the diocesan seminary (1796) until the founding of his community of "Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance [in *obsequium*] of Bishops" on November 4, 1816, Verona was to experience 20 years of upheaval due to the Napoleonic war.

The community established by Fr. Bertoni was intended for "any ministry whatsoever of the Word of God." Historically, this broad scope centered on the

Christian education of youth, dedication to the development of vocations to the clerical and consecrated life and the preaching of the Word of God.

From the outset, he committed his congregation to the patronage of Mary and Joseph, reflecting on the mystery of their Holy Espousals. This devotion found inspiration from a painting depicting this mystery that hung over the main altar of the first church offered to the community. However, the devotion enabled the community to see in these heavenly patron models and instructors in the way of holy abandonment through service of Jesus Christ and the living availability to the Church.

The men who joined Fr. Bertoni in the newly formed community were called "Stigmatines" from the title of the church named in honor of the Stigmata of St. Francis, adjoining their dwelling. Providentially, the Decree of Approbation, dated September 15, 1890, officially gave this title to the community: The Congregation [of the Priests] of the Sacred Stigmata of our Lord Jesus Christ".²⁶⁵ This reflected the desires of the early community, as well as the devotion to the Five Wounds practiced by the Founder and first members.

This present study reflects on various elements that constitute the spirituality of the recently canonized Fr. Gaspar Bertoni. He was an assiduous student of mystical theology, and the following aspects emerge from a review of his life and writings:

1. TRINITARIAN DIMENSION: The central mystery of the faith appears often in Fr. Bertoni's personal writings as well as in the legislation he left for his community. In the late summer and early autumn of 1808, he noted these thoughts in his personal diary.

August 24th: St. Joseph's Convent. God can be found in the depths of one's own nothingness. This evening I saw a painting of the Most Blessed Trinity. This inspired much reverence and love for the three Persons. The eternal Father was depicted with His arms opened, which explained His Mercy to me, and the ready communication of His gifts.²⁶⁶

September 27th: Meditation today was on the Incarnation. I experienced feelings of gratitude toward the Most Holy Trinity and of correspondence with Jesus Christ...²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ The most recent and complete biography of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni is by Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, CSS, *Vita e pensiero di Gaspare Bertoni*. Verona: Stigmatini [6 volumes]; cf. id., *Un modello di santo abbandono. Fisionomia spirituale del ven. Gaspar Bertoni*, Verona. Scuola tip. A.M.B. 1951.

²⁶⁶ *Memoriale Privato*. Verona: Stigmatini 1977 [Reprinted from 1911]. [Abbreviation *MP*] Augusst 24, 1808.

²⁶⁷ *MP* September 27, 1808, p. 215.

September 28th : During meditation today and afterwards, there was the desire and prayer for martyrdom... this evening, expressions of repentance. There was a sentiment of great love toward the Most Holy Trinity in giving us the son ... toward Him, there were feelings of much tenderness, together with a very vivid faith and a great desire for union. There was also the yearning for association in His sufferings and shame - with a prayer for the grace to suffer and to be disregarded as He was...²⁶⁸

Fr. Bertoni concentrated more on the "economic" Trinity: the divine Indwelling, the Eucharist, a sense of apostolic mission and on the virtue of hope. His missionary zeal flowed from a life shared together. A wide variety of ecclesial services was envisioned as coming out from, and enriching a fraternal union. In his original Constitutions,²⁶⁹ the Founder of the Stigmatines was much indebted to Francis Suarez' Commentary on the Rule of St. Ignatius of Loyola.²⁷⁰ Throughout these constitutions,, one can see that the Stigmatine Founder did indeed draw much inspiration from the Trinity.

The early Stigmatine rule contained the following points regarding the needed balance between the wide variety of service to be offered, and the need of community life. Fr. Bertoni presented his ideal on unity in these terms:

(A disposition for unity) depends on our interior spiritual progress: as a true charity, i.e., love for God and Christ increases, so, too, union among the confreres is increased and perfected, in so far as each one unites himself to God and to our Father.²⁷¹

... there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive the special endowment of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit and contemplate him as the image of God painted with the most beautiful colors of grace'²⁷²

A united fraternal community remained the ideal in the Founder's insistence on a diversified mission:

²⁶⁸ ib., September 18, 1808, p. 215.

²⁶⁹ cf. *Costituzioni del ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni. Fondatore dei Preti delle Stimate di N.S.G.C.* Verona: Scuola Tip. A.M.B. 1951. (Abbreviation: CF)

²⁷⁰ Francis Suarez, SJ, *De Religione Societatis Iesu in particulari*, in: *Opera Omnia*, Tomus XVI. Tractatus Decimus. Paris: Ludovicum Vives 1860.

²⁷¹ cf. CF # 221.

²⁷² cf. CF # 223.

... in this clerical congregation, whose purpose is not only contemplation, but also to hand on to others the truths that have been contemplated, a more than ordinary knowledge is needed.²⁷³

... the more important duties of the ministry pertain to the Graduate Fathers ...²⁷⁴

the end of the Congregation is to serve the Church by the various ministries of its vocation, under the direction of the bishops...²⁷⁵

With this varied apostolic mission, the emphasis on unity within the group constitutes the most extended part of the original constitutions. The Founder's ideal for community life would warrant a study in itself as it is the central concern of the first Stigmatine rule. For this diversity in the Apostolic Mission, Fr. Bertoni asked of his confreres a truly competent and continuing formation. He envisioned a broad program of intellectual specialization to keep pace with the spiritual progress of the community as a whole. His ideal asked for eminence in the sacred sciences, all for a better service of the Church:²⁷⁶

... this community will not be able to continue unless it has the solid support of learning in its various members: ignorance will be the first germ of corruption of this community.²⁷⁷

Variety in unity is one of the paradoxes that Fr. Bertoni yearned for his community. He dreamed of a plurality of talents along with an intense common life, all at the service of the Church in a competent dedication to the apostolic mission. The source of this dream seems to have been the Most Holy Trinity.

Fr. Bertoni often pondered the mystery of divine love within the trinity. Prayer for him was also a "seeking of the Lord" to discern His will, translating this quest into sentiments of effective gratitude to the merciful God for his vocation. In his view, service of the Church is its supreme expression. He considered the experiences of life as a kind of "oblation" [*obsequium*] to the Lord, providing special opportunities to imitate Christ. In expressions that seem unusual, Fr. Bertoni pondered the distinction of the persons within the Trinity. On one occasion as a young priest, his revered Bishop [Liruti, OSB] came to hear one of his catechism lessons already in progress, and the episode was later recorded in his diary:

²⁷³ cf. CF # 49.

²⁷⁴ cf. CF # 158.

²⁷⁵ cf. CF # 185.

²⁷⁶ cf. CF # 56.

²⁷⁷ cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, Letter to Leopoldina Naudet, March 8, 1813. Manoscritti Bertoni (Mss B) [Stigmatine General Archives] Vol. 5, # 9209.

**One has to be prepared to stand with confidence before Christ at any time,
no longer as Father, but as Judge.**²⁷⁸

In such reflections, there may be a "soteriological inversion" by which certain properties of the Trinity are applied to one, or other of the divine Persons.

2. CHRISTOLOGICAL DIMENSION: This aspect has been already the object of a published study,²⁷⁹ which traces the gradual intensification of the life of grace, in so far as it appears through his writings and activities. His was an experience of intimate friendship with Christ, the Father's Servant [cf. Is 53; Ph 2:5-11]m and Spouse of the Church [cf. Ep 5:22, ff.; Rv 21 & 22]. The concrete form of his imitation of Christ has also been studied.²⁸⁰ It is readily apparent that the Person of Jesus Christ dominated Fr. Bertoni's life:

Today's meditation was on the Reign of Christ. I experienced a strong inspiration to follow the Lord closely, even at the cost of life, through poverty and ignominy.²⁸¹

I desire to imitate Christ in poverty and in the hardships of poverty...²⁸²

We are called to draw a portrait of Jesus Christ within ourselves...²⁸³

While praying before Mass, I experienced drowsiness, but heard these words from the Cross: 'Look at this, My Heart!' With this, it seemed that a wondrous light pervaded my intellect, along with a sudden and intense fervor. With this, there was the great desire to see the Lord's heart. The effect of all this was a most tender devotion to the Sacred Heart. There was great affection during Holy Mass, expressed through tears of joy at Holy Communion. Then I experienced recollection and devotion all day with an increase of the three theological virtues...²⁸⁴

With much naturalness, the Stigmatine Founder used a variety of terms to describe his relationship with Christ: "to follow the Lord more closely" - "to imitate Him" - "to correspond" to Jesus Christ. It may be that the Synoptics stress more the "following" of Christ, while Paul speaks of "imitating" Him, but it does not seem that

²⁷⁸ cf. MP, November 20, 1808, p. 221.

²⁷⁹ cf. Joseph Henchey, CSS, "L'esperienza di Gesù Cristo nella vita di P. Gaspare Bertoni." in: *Saggi sullo spirito del B. Gaspare Bertoni*, 3. Roma: Curia Generalizia degli Stigmatini 1984, 59 pp.

²⁸⁰ cf. Nello Ddalle Vedove, CSS, *Un modello d santo abbandono* - pp. 260, ff.

²⁸¹cf. MP, September 25, 1808.

²⁸² ib., November 22, 1808.

²⁸³ ib., February 26, 1809.

²⁸⁴ ib., May 30, 1812, pp. 241, ff.

in Fr. Bertoni there is any such distinction. He simply chose to follow/imitate/correspond with Jesus Christ in His poverty, shame, crucifixion, and was encouraged through His resurrection, ascension and glory. In all the sufferings of his own, Fr. Bertoni was able to "identify" with Christ, the Servant of the father, and the Spouse of the Church.

The Stigmatine Founder did not specifically meditate on the biblical symbol of the Immolated, Spouse of the Church. However, this does capture many elements of his thought. His "Christology" presents dimensions of St. Paul's Christological Hymn and the *kenosis*,²⁸⁵ along with reflections from the Calvary and resurrection scenes in John's Gospel, with particular attention given to the wound in Christ's side. In a letter to Pope Gregory XVI, dated in 1844, Fr. Bertoni describes a devotion that he personally conducted every Friday evening from 1822 on, i.e., from the time of his re-opening the Church of the Stigmata to the public:

Every Friday of the year ... towards evening, a devotion has been held which follows this pattern:

For the "Steps of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ" are sung. Then, for about one half hour, an instruction is given that has as its purpose that of promoting Christian virtue, but especially veneration and devotion towards our crucified Lord; there immediately follows the adoration of the Five Wounds...

Our purpose is that the piety of the faithful towards the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ might be intensified, and also that the number of the faithful might be increased. The gaining of the indulgences depends on the veneration ...and adoration of the Five Wounds, following the instruction...²⁸⁶

Fr. Bertoni's consistency is an expression of his own innermost conviction. Being enriched by St. Thomas,²⁸⁷ he was profoundly convinced that true devotion consists in the will to give one's entire self over to God, a life-long *obsequium*, in dedication to His service.²⁸⁸

While the style of the time concentrated for the most part on the passion and death aspects of the Paschal Mystery, Fr. Bertoni also was moved by the mystery of

²⁸⁵ cf. Ph 2: 5-11.

²⁸⁶ cf. *Epistolario del ven. Servo di Dio, D.G. Bertoni. Fondatore dei Preti delle Ss. Stimate di N.S.G.C.* Verona: Scuola Tip. A.M.B. 1955, 345 pp. (abbreviation Ep.).

²⁸⁷ cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 82, a. 1 c.

²⁸⁸ cf. Sermon II "La divozione", in: *Pagine di vita cristiana del ven. Servo di Dio, D.G. Bertoni, Fondatore dei Preti delle S. Stimate di N.S.G.C.* Vicenza: Stocchiero 1947, pp. 200 (Abbreviation: PVC).

the wounds retained in the risen body of Christ and the apostles' mission [cf. Jn 20:19, ff.]. An interesting phenomenon takes place in the Stigmatine Founder's writings. By a kind of coupling of the Good Friday and Easter aspects of the Stigmata [*binômes de totalité*?] Fr. Bertoni very often paired both dimensions in his preaching and writing.

This may be noted in a Good Friday sermon²⁸⁹ as compared with a later Easter homily,²⁹⁰ he eloquently speaks of a new spring-time pushing up through the bitter cold of the winter a new life. He quotes Cornelius a Lapide: '... if you wish to find me, look for me in the Wound of Christ's side...".

In 1810, he preached an Ignatian retreat to the newly approved confessors of the Diocese of Verona. One of the conferences was reserved for the passion of Christ, His agony in the Garden and redeeming blood. This was followed by a reflection on the resurrection and ascension into heaven, in which Fr. Bertoni states:

... Imagine that you see Him as He appeared to some of His disciples, so full of life and with the scars of His wounds inviting you, too, to heaven... Christ entered heaven with the signs of His wounds: this is the price, He says, with which I bought this kingdom. It cannot be had for anything less...²⁹¹

In tribute to his outstanding preaching ability, he was called upon twice to give "Franciscan" panegyrics that have come down to us: one in honor of St. Francis of Assisi in 1808, and the other for the canonization of the Capuchin mystic, St. Veronica Giuliani, in 1839. In his thoughts concerning the stigmatist of Assisi, Fr. Bertoni speaks of "crucified love", union with the crucified, quoting the Song of Songs. In this presentation, Fr. Bertoni brings together the nuptial theme and the stigmata: only the faithful "spouse" will follow the wounded Christ in the adult school of love.²⁹²

In his reflections regarding the Capuchin mystic, Fr. Bertoni emphasized the impression of the stigmata on St. Veronica Giuliani together with her formal "nuptials" with Christ. She is presented as "the Spouse of the Crucified God".²⁹³ Fr. Bertoni describes her glorious nuptials:

²⁸⁹ cf. Sermon 4, "La Passione", April 3, 1801, and April 4, 1806, in: OPVC pp. 270, ff.

²⁹⁰ cf. Sermon 38, "La santa Pasqua, Vita spirituale", April 5, 1801, in: PVC pp. 289, ff.

²⁹¹ Retreat to the Clergy, September 18010, "Passione, Risurrezione e Ascensione", in: Mss B, Vol. II, ## 2613; 2632; 2635; 2637; 2647.

²⁹² cf. Panegyric in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4, 1808, in: Mss B, Vol. II, ## 1783-1874.

²⁹³ Panegyric in honor of St. Veronica Giuliani, December 29, 1839, in: Mss B, Vol. II, ## 2126-2172.

... On Holy Saturday, Jesus Christ appeared to her, informing her of her nuptials the next day... the marriage would be contracted during her (Easter) Communion...

The integral aspects of the paschal Mystery are found also in Fr. Bertoni's description of his own devotion to the Sacred Heart. In his *Memoriale Privato*, he notes that he is being called to make an "oblation" [**obsequium**] of all that is created to the Creator and mentions the crucifix beckoning to him.²⁹⁴ In a sermon on the Sacred Heart a few days later, Fr. Bertoni speaks of the wounded Heart of Christ - and of the Church, His Spouse:

... The side opened after His death shows us that Heart... wounded by the lance, that wound preserved in His glorious body... It is impossible to venerate the wounded Heart without remembering and venerating His immense love ... The abyss of misery calls out to the Abyss of Mercy...²⁹⁵

Fr. Bertoni was deeply moved by the divine Son's obedience as an expression of His love for the Father and for humanity:

'I have not come of Myself... I really come from Him ... I was sent, and by him ... for I always do what is pleasing to Him ... My food is to do the will of the One Who sent Me... I honor My Father... when a man's doctrine is his own, he is hoping to get honor for himself - but when he is working for the honor of the one who sent him, then he is sincere...²⁹⁶

3. EUCHARISTIC DIMENSION: One of the key words in Fr. Bertoni's vocabulary was *obsequium*. In the Vulgate, it can be found in St. Paul's exhortation to the Romans: "... think of God's mercy... offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God..."²⁹⁷ In the choice of this particular ideal, Fr. Bertoni drew heavily also from St. Ignatius of Loyola, particularly his "mysticism of service". The Jesuit Founder repeatedly used the Spanish *servir/servicio* in describing the Company's apostolic mission at the service of the Roman Pontiff. The Latin translation for this in the Jesuit Constitutions finds a variety of expressions: *servire/servitium*; *auxilium/auxiliari* - and the oft-repeated *obsequium/obsequi*.

²⁹⁴ cf. MP, July 2, 188, p. 207; May 30, 1812, pp. 241, ff.

²⁹⁵ cf. Sacred Heart, June 5, 1812, in: Mss B II, ## 1755, ff.

²⁹⁶ Some important Johannine texts showing the relationship of Jesus to His Father: 4:34; 5:43; 6:3; 7:18; 8:16; 18, 28, 42, 50; 10:36; 12:49; 14:31. Cf. F. M. Braun, OP, "La Mission du Christ", in: *Jean le théologien. Sa théologie. Le mystère du Jésus-Christ*. Paris: Gabalda Vol. 3, 1, pp. 58-75; in: "La mission apostolique", in: *Jean le théologien. Le Christ, notre Seigneur hier, aujourd'hui, toujours*. Paris: Gabalda 1972, Vol. III, 2, pp. 57-63.

²⁹⁷ cf. Rm 12:1, ff.; cf. also 1 P 2:5.

In the Latin text of the Ignatian Constitutions, Part VII is wholly dedicated to the "Missions" of the Roman Pontiff, to which the Society is specifically dedicated, with repeated emphasis on *missio/missiones in obsequium*. This ideal is inspired by the Eternal Son's loving deference, offering Himself to the Father on behalf of the Church - memorialized in the Eucharistic celebration.

Fr. Bertoni's diary is permeated with a Eucharistic spirituality, expressing the sacrificial oblation out of love:

After Mass today, during the thanksgiving, I experienced the most vivid sentiment of faith in the presence of Our Lord and much confidence: I yearned to offer myself to suffer with and for Him.²⁹⁸

During Mass today, I received from the Lord the gift of making a continual offering of my whole endeavor to the Sacrifice, with much affection...²⁹⁹

During Mass today, at the Secret memento, I experienced a kind of broadening of my understanding to know with whom I was engaged, and also great affections and expansion of charity in prayer. There followed then certain movements of my heart to God, and something like inspirations of the Spirit in God. It seemed much like one friend who suddenly meets someone whom he had not seen for a long time. At this unexpected encounter there is the sudden impulse to embrace him. There followed a deep desire that this meeting become more intense, along with the inspiration to reach out to the Supreme Good. At the same time, there was some fear of vanity, as I was in public - so, I had recourse to the consideration of grave sins. Both the recognition of goodness and love intensified, which led to tears of joy. This lasted until after Communion. Faith and confidence grew even more, together with humility and loving reverence.

Finally, at the Communion, there was a deep sense of devotion and sentiments, much like those I experienced at my First Communion as a young boy, which, so far as I can remember, I had never experienced since. A sense of recollection remained afterwards, all day until evening...³⁰⁰

The Eucharistic spirit is one of the "constants" of his growth in grace:

²⁹⁸ MP, July 11, 1808, p. 208.

²⁹⁹ ib., July 24, 1808, p. 209.

³⁰⁰ cf. ib. October 9, 1808, pp. 216. - this was Fr. Bertoni's 31st birthday.

During Mass today, I experienced brief, but very vivid illuminations and a deep sense of the divine presence, with confidence, love and the desire to be transformed into Him: that Jesus might even more truly live in me and that I would live no longer for myself. After Mass, this experience of union did not last but it came back again along my way, as I was taking care of some family business, just like it was when I was in church...³⁰¹

There is some indication of a certain harmony between his Trinitarian and Eucharistic devotions:

Today I experienced a rather vivid, reverential and loving sentiment of the Father's presence at the *Te igitur* of the Mass - together with intense confidence and love for the Son. I also experienced a sense of the priestly dignity in the person of Christ before His Father. Then a greater tenderness and profound humility came over me in holding Christ in my hands right after the consecration: this was really Supreme Goodness joined to supreme malice: the Most Pure with the most unclean: the Most Holy, with the greatest sinner. This sentiment lasted through Communion. Afterwards, until evening, compunction...³⁰²

On Christmas Day that year, Fr. Bertoni experienced a most profound appreciation of his vocation during the celebration of the Eucharist:

During the three Masses today: recollection - and the sentiment of the great benefit of my vocation. What a great good it is to forget and to despoil oneself of the created world to seek the Lord alone. How God honors and loves His humiliated Son. O, what a debt is ours to do for Him, at least in part, what He first has done for us.³⁰³

4. BIBLICAL DIMENSION: Early in his vocation and throughout his life, Fr. Bertoni considered the Word of God as the rule of his life and activity.³⁰⁴ God's Word is compared to the star leading the Magi. The Stigmatine Founder's interest and esteem for the Word of God is evident particularly when he entered the seminary. From this

³⁰¹ ib., November 25, 1808, p. 219.

³⁰² ib., December 11, 1808, p. 222. This "Trinitarian" aspect of the Eucharist was also present to him on January 11, 1809, pp. 224: 'During Mass, at the Consecration, I experienced a rather vivid sentiment of the presence of Christ like that of a friend who speaks with another: and also of the Father's presence. In some way, I experienced the distinction of these divine persons in one sole nature. There was much reverence and love: this lasted for about a half hour.' Also cf. M.V. Bernadot, OP, *The Eucharist and the Trinity*. Wilmington: Glazier.

³⁰³ cf. MP, December 25, 1808, p. 224.

³⁰⁴ This was the title of his Sermon 35, preached on the Epiphany in 1806, in: PVC, pp. 251-262. cf. also Giuseppe Furlani, CSS, "La parola di Dio - regola del pensiero e dell'azione del v. Gaspard Bertoni", in: *Saggi sullo spirito del B. Gaspard Bertoni*, 1. Roma: Curia Gen. degli Stigmatini 1983, 29 pp.

time on especially, it is clear that he read the scriptures many times, making them his principal and favorite study.³⁰⁵ Everything he accomplished was imbued with God's Word: from his first parish sermons as a newly ordained priest, through his more sophisticated and scholarly meditations on biblical themes and on the various books of scripture. This is most evident in his preaching to the clergy and in the spiritual direction to religious, as also in his own diary. All of his intense priestly activity offers abundant evidence that he was permeated with God's Word.

5. ECCLESIAL DIMENSION: In accord with St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians [c. 5], the Book of Revelations and St. Ignatius' *Formula* of the Company of Jesus, Fr. Bertoni very often thought of the Church as "the Spouse of Christ." His central text in this regard is found in one of his letters of spiritual direction:

(Remaining firm while waiting for greater clarity) seems to be the practice of His Spouse, which is the Church. As she has been assured by the divine promise of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, she never gives up seeking light for her activity, either in the defense of the Truth entrusted to her, or in matters of discipline. And when she does see her way clearly, she never holds back on her activity, or on further study, or consultation, so that she might proceed in the light and in her task.

And in both these manners, her abandonment to God is always uniform. This, unless I am mistaken, is the perfect model of our abandonment in the Lord.

To abandon oneself to the omnipotent power of Divine Providence is a beautiful virtue when we are not able to act on our own. But, it is even more perfect and consummate virtue when we can act ... and yet, never cease from being equally and totally abandoned to His power...³⁰⁶

However, with the sensitivity that was so characteristic of him, Fr. Bertoni noted in his diary:

Whoever is drawn by the Spirit to a way of greater perfection, such as being totally abandoned in everything to God, should not look down on others who may seem to be of inferior virtue, making us of lesser, but good means...³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ cf. Furlani, "La parola di Dio", p. 11. cf. also Divo Barsotti, *Magistero dei Santi*. AVE 1971, pp. 131, ff. The author writes that it would be very difficult to find among spiritual writers, at least in more recent times, any greater dependence on Sacred Scripture than in Fr. Bertoni.

³⁰⁶ Letter 39 to L. Naudet, October 16, 1839, in: Ep pp. 99, ff.

³⁰⁷ cf. MP, October 12, 1808, p. 217.

His dedication to the Church has been the object of a recent well-documented study³⁰⁸ It is clear that Fr. Bertoni as a diocesan priest had a truly dedicated commitment to the local church, but stipulated in his original rule that each Stigmatine is called to an inner disposition to go *anywhere in the diocese, or the world*, a kind of geographical abandonment [*quocumque*].³⁰⁹ His diocesan spirituality³¹⁰ was coupled with a universal missionary zeal. He hoped that the Stigmatine would bring "a more than ordinary" competence to the far corners of the globe, to assist the various bishops in their pressing needs that might indeed change with the times, and in accord with the different areas served.

His great ideal was to see the Stigmatines espoused solely to Christ our Lord: each is called to be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin, holy in mind and body.³¹¹

Fr. Cornelio Fabro reflected on this ecclesial aspect of the Stigmatine Founder's spirituality.³¹² He writes:

In drawing up his Constitutions, (Fr. Bertoni) was inspired by 'that outstanding model, which is the Company of Jesus', in that he excluded none of its ministries. His 'going anywhere in the diocese and the world' develops his first Constitution. In fact, his sons have indeed gone everywhere that the voice of the Church has called them: to preaching, schools, missions...³¹³

Fr. Bertoni's response to the changing demands of the Church in the various parts of the world asks of each member [*quicumque*] a kind of "personal abandonment" and an abandonment of each of the personnel, to be prepared in the Congregation, taken as a whole, for "any ministry whatsoever of the Word of God" - an "apostolic abandonment" [*Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium*].³¹⁴

6. ESPOUSALS DIMENSION: To achieve this ideal, Fr. Bertoni thought of Mary and Joseph precisely in their holy espousals as the principal patrons of the Congregation. With Jesus Christ as the central inspiration of his charism, the Stigmatine Founder considered the Holy Spouses in their total self-giving to Christ,

³⁰⁸ Fuasto Longo, CSS, *Don Gaspare Bertoni. Uomo ecclesiale*. Verona: Curia Provinciale degli Stigmatini 1987, 53 pp.

³⁰⁹ cf. CF # 5.

³¹⁰ cf. F. Longo, *Uomo ecclesiale...*, pp. 33, ff.

³¹¹ cf. CF # 109.

³¹² cf. Cornelio Fabro CSS, *Un sacerdote ecclesiale. Beato Gaspare Bertoni*. Verona: Stigmatini 1975.

³¹³ cf. ib., p. 10.

³¹⁴ cf. CF # 163.

while thinking of Him as the Servant of the Father and the Spouse of the Church and of the faithful.

During the first Marian Year of 1954, Fr. Joseph Stofella wrote:

Why would Fr. Bertoni decide that his community should have Mary Most Holy, and St. Joseph for its heavenly patrons, precisely in the mystery of their Espousals? There might be those who would smile when they hear that the Founder wanted this mystery of the Espousals as the heavenly patrons for a religious congregation of ... apostolic missionaries...³¹⁵

Citing St. Thomas Aquinas,³¹⁶ Fr. Stofella responded:

... among the various arguments of convenience why Christ should be born of a married virgin there is the following: 'So that by this there would also be implied the universal Church: while the Church is a virgin, she is espoused to one man, Christ' [St. Augustine]. In this, there is a synthesis of the nuptials of the soul with God...³¹⁷

Fr. Stofella continues:

... the mystery of this virginal espousals was taken up by Fr. Bertoni, not in some partial manner, nor as a simple addition to some other mystery. Rather, he chose it precisely for itself as it is, in all its doctrinal, devotional and practical integrity. There is also the further reason that in this, he could contemplate the example that is beyond all comparison of what constitutes the very heart of his own spirituality, i.e., the spirit of holy abandonment... The Holy Espousals is the most fitting devotion to draw believers to a total union with Him, being a most attractive and eloquent example of total service to God...³¹⁸

It is interesting to note that in all his own references to Mary, Fr. Bertoni most often. Even though he does not speak of her as "spouse" refers to the mysteries of her Immaculate Conception, her Virginity and her Divine Maternity.³¹⁹ Even though he does not speak of her as "spouse", the devotion to the Holy Spouses in the community from the beginning has been its central Marian devotion. In a recent

³¹⁵ cf. Giuseppe Stofella, CSS, "Il culto e la devozione dello Sposalizio di Maria Vergine nei primi Padri delle Stimate", in: *Collectanea Stigmatina di documenti e di studi riservati agli Stigmatini*. Roma: Curia Gen. Stigmatini. Vol. I, fasc. III, pp. 357, ff. [Abbreviation: CS].

³¹⁶ *Summa*, III, q. 29.

³¹⁷ cf. Stofella, "Il culto e la devozione dello Sposalizio", in: CS I, p. 358.

³¹⁸ *ib.*, pp. 361, 363.

³¹⁹ cf. MP, May 24, 1810. Prayer cited by Fr. Bertoni: *Buon giorno, Madre mia...*

exegetical study, Fr. Ignace de la Potterie, SJ³²⁰ shows that there is a "transposition" of the personalities in John's account of Cana.³²¹ There is evidence of "substitution" of the married couple who remains always in the background - by Jesus, Who is the real Spouse of the Church in the New Covenant. This is simply the fulfillment of the prophetic tradition with its Christological realization. The fourth gospel is indeed an ecclesial gospel, presenting Jesus as the divine Spouse of the new People of God: John the Baptist is seen as the "friend of the groom".³²² In Fr. de la Potterie's interpretation, Mary is considered as the Spouse in the messianic banquet, Christ's unique helpmate in the work of salvation.

Guided by Fr. Bertoni's spirituality, the Espousals of Mary and Joseph are presented in these terms in the recently approved Constitutions of the Stigmatine community:

The Congregation is placed under the patronage of the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph. The confreres look to them as models of intimate communion with Christ and honor them according to our tradition.³²³

Entrusted to the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph, we implore their help and protection to fulfill our vocation. We see in their help and protection to fulfill our vocation. We see in them a model of intimate union with Christ and the example of a confident and generous availability.³²⁴

• • •

CONCLUSION

The Stigmatine Founder summarized his ideal of Abandonment to God and Availability to the Church in his first Constitution:

*Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*³²⁵

In this brief formula there is synthesized his missionary ideal:

³²⁰ cf. Ignace de la Potterie, SJ, "Il mistero delle nozze. Sposa delle nozze messianiche", in: *Maria nel mistero delle nozze*. Genova: Marietti 1988, pp. 177, ff.

³²¹ cf. Jn 2:1-12.

³²² cf. Jn 3:29.

³²³ *Constitutions and General Directory of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. 1984, n. 11.

³²⁴ ib., # 42.

³²⁵ cf. CF # 1.

*Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium.*³²⁶

By establishing this purpose for his community, Fr. Bertoni was able to express the spirit of holy abandonment to the merciful will of God, as well as present the ideal of competent apostolic missionary availability to the Church through the bishops. This combination of "self-abandonment to God"³²⁷ and "availability to the Church"³²⁸ is the heart of the charism manifest in his own devotions: to the Trinity, to Jesus Christ, to the Eucharist, to the Word of God and to the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph. His Christological charism is apostolic, missionary, growing out of an intensely devout life.

The Stigmatine is called to inwardly free, able to be led by the Holy Spirit.³²⁹ The living of the Apostolic Mission flows from the lived experience of Christ's relationship to His Father, one of loving obedience, personal self-emptying, deep union, for the sake of the Church.

One of the key terms that appears often in Fr. Bertoni's writings is *obsequium*. Any reading of his texts would show just how often it does appear, and how varied its application:

- *toward God* : the divine *obsequium* is some kind of measure of one's love for God in meeting the strong attraction of this world.³³⁰ Faith itself is an *obsequium* that the created intelligence offers to the Creator. This is the oblation of St. Paul³³¹ and God deserves our best.³³²

- *toward Jesus Christ*: put before your mind's eye a king divinely chosen, to whom all power reverence and service [*obsequium*]³³³. The soldiers opened His right

³²⁶ cf. CF # 185.

³²⁷ cf. Jean-Pierre de Caussade, *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*. Great Britain: Collins 1972.

³²⁸ Fr. Bertoni's central idea came from St. Ignatius' charism described in recent times by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, *Integrazione e disponibilità. Lettere del Padre Generale 1976-1977*. Presso la Curia Provinciale d'Italia 1977. cf. also *Entorno a una consigna disponibles. El corazon de nuestra identidad*. Borgo S. Spirito, S. Roma: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritulitatis, Vol. IX, 1978: 2.

³²⁹ cf. Jose' Alberto Moura, CSS, *O Espirito Santo no carisma do Pe. Gaspar Bertoni*. Roma: Curia Geral dos Estigmatinos 1988, 314 pp.

³³⁰ cf. Sermon 16, "Preparazione alla S. Pasqua", February 22, 1808, in: PVC p. 262.

³³¹ cf. "Discorso sulla Fede", in: Mss B. Vol. I, # 1555.

³³² cf. Sermon 11, "La devozione", April 20, 184, in: PVC p. 205.

³³³ Priests' Retreat, September 1801, "Regno di Cristo", in: CS: Vol. I, pp. 167, ff.

side by a gaping wound... we are called to make up for this wrong with the just offering [*obsequium*] of our tears.³³⁴

- *toward the Divine Word* : one walks worthily in this vocation only by submitting one's intellect humbly [*obsequium*] to belief in the Word of God;³³⁵

- *toward the Eucharist* : we read of the *obsequium* toward the divine sacrament in the lives of the saints;³³⁶

- *toward Mary* : who wishes this most pleasing *obsequium* and it is with this that we should pronounce her Name;³³⁷

The Bishops of Verona who knew Fr. Bertoni in the years of his priestly ministry [1800 - 1853] were most enthusiastic in their description of the apostolic mission of the Stigmatine community.

Bishop Joseph Grasser spoke of the Stigmatine Founder and his community in glowing terms:

- we can testify that Fr. Bertoni is a priest, outstanding in holiness, doctrine and charity, who has made himself all things to all. He is truly extraordinary in his dedication to the formation of the seminarians, especially through retreats and spiritual direction, as well as in the education of youth...³³⁸

Archbishop Aurelio Mutti, later Patriarch of Venice, testified on December 7, 1853:

... this institute has no other purpose than that of offering every kind of service to the Diocese, on the invitation of the Ordinary... they have been outstanding in zeal and charity, always ready to respond to our requests, especially in hearing confessions, assisting the sick and dying, and serving as prison chaplains. We have no hesitancy at all in stating that we could not ever have expected any greater or more beneficial service from them on behalf of the diocese...³³⁹

Bishop Benedict Riccabona's Letter, dated July 22, 1854, describes the early Stigmatines in a similar vein:

³³⁴ Sermon 4, "La Passione", April 3, 1801; April 4, 1806, in: PVC p. 286.

³³⁵ cf. Sermon 35, "Epifania: La regola del nostro pensare e operare", January 6, 1806, in: PVC pp. 259, ff.

³³⁶ cf. "Sacred Heart", June 5, 1812, in: Mss B, Vol. II, # 1760.

³³⁷ cf. Sermon 8, "Casa di Loreto", December 13, 1801, in: PVC pp. 302, ff.

³³⁸ A typed copy of Bishop Grasser's letter, dated June 18, 1831, is found in the Stigmatine General Archives, Rome.

³³⁹ cf. *Causa Beatificationis et canonizationis ven. Servi Dei, Gasparis Bertoni. Positio super virtutibus. Summarium Additionale.* Verona 1960. Documento XXIII, Vol. II, p. 250.

... From the very beginning, this Congregation has always been dedicated to each and every ecclesiastical ministry whatever ... especially in hearing confessions, teaching, giving parish missions, retreats to the clergy, teaching catechism, assisting the dying and the imprisoned. They often called upon to be professors of philosophy and theology ... for any unexpected need whatever ...they are truly prepared to serve in any ministry to which obedience calls them...

Therefore, the members of this Institute propose to spend themselves in assisting the bishop of the diocese in which they dwell, especially by giving parish missions, retreats, catechetical instructions, sermons, as well as by the Christian formation of the youth, being totally dedicated to guiding them in piety and helping them in their studies, in oratories, in seminaries and in their own schools...³⁴⁰

The Decree of Approbation given from the Secretariat of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, September 15, 1890, summarizes these testimonies and describes the Stigmatine ideal in these terms:

... While attending to their own sanctification, they strive above all to assist bishops working for the salvation of their neighbor, through any exercise of the ecclesiastical ministry and through every work of spiritual charity, excluding the ordinary and perpetual care of souls and of sisters...³⁴¹

Fr. Bertoni quoted Paul's Letter to the Church of Philippi, in which the Apostle to the Gentiles is inviting all the members of what is perhaps the first European community, to become better at what they are, to make progress:

... I am quite sure that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the day of Christ Jesus comes...³⁴²

The Stigmatine Founder often used this text and it is found in one of his central Constitutions:

... Since the purpose of our Congregation is to serve the Church with the various ministries of her vocation under the direction of the Bishops - and since this is, at times, arduous and difficult; and since - if we consider human frailty alone - it might even seem exposed to dangers - the program of our particular dedication to the Church cannot for this reason be said to be imprudent or rash.

³⁴⁰ ib. *Causa... Summarium Additionale*, Doc. XXIII, pp. 250, ff.

³⁴¹ An English Translation of the Decree of Approbation may be found as Appendix II, D, of the actual Stigmatine Constitutions.

³⁴² cf. Ph 1:6.

The reason is in the first place we believe that the realization of this plan does not depend on human strength but on the grace of the Holy Spirit: since the One who has inspired and begun this work, will bring it to fulfillment whenever our own resources are not enough to keep it going: this is the special grace of our vocation, a grace that is stronger than every danger and difficulty.³⁴³

The Stigmatine community's ideal today is described in these terms by the recent decree for the approval of the revised Constitutions:

The Religious of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the spirit of their Founder - Gaspar Bertoni, dedicate themselves to the 'Apostolic Mission', serving the Bishops through diverse ministries of the Word of God, particularly through preaching, offering assistance to clerics and the Christian education of youth.³⁴⁴

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³⁴³ cf. CF # 185.

³⁴⁴ cf. Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. Decree Prot. N. V, 14 - 1/82, June 12, 1984, the 131st anniversary of the death of the Founder.

Section Four

The Divine Indwelling: The Source and Scope of the Apostolic Mission]

[The English original of an article published in Italian
as: L'inabitazione divina: sorgente e scopo della Missione Apostolica, *in*:
Compendio di teologia spirituale in onore di Jordan Aumann, OP.
ROMA: PUST 1992, pp. 121-142,
translated into Italian by Fr. Giorgio MARCATO, OP].

Introduction

There is an ascending totality in all Christian spirituality: the Triune God dwells within - this inspires and enables ecclesial service - which redounds to ever-lasting life with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To realize this, each charism in the Church receives from her and contributes to her.

In describing his own Dominican charism, Fr. Jordan Aumann in his recent book *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, writes:

... because of the central role which the study of sacred truth plays in the Dominican life, the spirituality of the Friars Preachers is at once a doctrinal spirituality, and an apostolic spirituality...³⁴⁵

This has been alluded to in an oft-quoted passage from St. Thomas Aquinas, who taught this principle:

It is better to give to others the fruits of one's contemplation than merely to contemplate...³⁴⁶

The values of *contemplata aliis tradere* are, of course, not limited to the Dominican Order. In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the recent council has taught:

... The Church is essentially both human and divine, visible but endowed with visible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation [*contemplationi vacantem*], present in the world, but as a pilgrim, so constituted that in her the human is directed toward and subordinated to [*ordinetur... subordinetur*] to the divine, the visible to the invisible, action to

³⁴⁵ cf. Jordan Aumann, OP, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*. San Francisco: Ignatius/Sheed & Ward 1986, pp. 129, ff.

³⁴⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 188, a. 6 c.

contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, the object of our quest...³⁴⁷

The biblical citation, then, is Heb 13:14, that we do not have here a lasting city, but seek the one to come.

This emphasis on contemplation is also one of the elements noted by the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation for an increase in faith during this earthly pilgrimage:

... The Tradition that comes from the Apostles makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts [cf. Lk 2:19, 51]. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with the right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth. Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her...³⁴⁸

This prayerful contemplation, a vital element in increasing the faith in the pilgrim church, will lead to its commitment to the spreading of the kingdom and to eternal life, described in these terms by Pope Benedict XII:

... Since the passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and see the divine essence with an intuitive vision and even face to face ... plainly, clearly and openly...³⁴⁹

In the whole life of the Church, the Trinity dwelling within is the primary Agent, as well as the ultimate Goal: life eternal. Every believer is called to contemplate the mystery of God within, communicate the fruits of this without, and live forever in the same union that has been begun in time. We will see Him then face to face, even though now we see Him as though in a mirror [cf. 1 Co 13:12] - we will see Him as He is [cf. 1 Jn 3:2]:

... For if we continue to love one another and to join in praising the Most Holy trinity - all of us who are sons of God and form one family in Christ [cf.

³⁴⁷ cf. SC # 2.

³⁴⁸ cf. DV 8.

³⁴⁹ cf. Pope Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus*, January 29, 1336, in: D-S # 530, in: *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*. Revised edition, Edited by J. Neuner, SJ, and J. Dupuis, SJ. Staten Island: Alba 1982, # 2305, pp. 684, ff.

Heb 3:6] - we will be faithful to the deepest vocation of the Church and will share in a foretaste of the liturgy in perfect glory [cf. SC 8...³⁵⁰

The Trinity who dwell within is the Source of the Apostolic Mission of the Church, its inner unifying force as well as its eschatological Hope. Eternal life is the loving praise of the Trinity offered by the Church in Glory.

THE DIVINE INDWELLING

... Theologians have written much and disputed about the nature of the Indwelling of the Trinity in the souls of the just. Perhaps none of the theories provides an adequate explanation; certainly no one of them has been commonly accepted. But, what is important for our purposes is not so much the formality and mode of the Indwelling as the fact, its purposes and its consequences...³⁵¹.

The Creation story and a later reflection on it describe humanity as 'made to the image and likeness of God' [cf. Gn 1:26; Ws 2:23]. With the coming of Jesus Christ, then, this image is open to becoming a "new self", one that will make progress the more it accepts and cooperates with renewal in the image of the Creator [cf. Col 3:5, ff.]. This whole process is dynamic, and will continue to change our lowliness to conform more and more with its own glorified body [cf. Ph 3:21]. The Christian call is to bear the image of the Heavenly man [cf. 1 Co 15:49].

Having been created with a natural capacity for God and a passive ability to be elevated to a higher life, each human being made to God's image and likeness is called to imitate Him in His holiness, mercy. The Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity empowers one to be deeply immersed in the mission of the Church. Perseverance in this will lead to eternal union with the Trinity. the divine presence within leads to the life-long commitment to the "total Christ" and to life everlasting.

John's Gospel offers the underlying principle:

... I pray not only for these but for those also who through their words will believe in me. may they all be one, Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe that it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. With me in them, and you in me, may they be completely one,

³⁵⁰ LG 51.

³⁵¹ cf. Jordan Aumann, OP, *Spiritual Theology*. London: Sheed & Ward 1980, pp. 75, ff. cf. also A. Michel, "Trinite": Missions Invisibles /Habitation dans les âmes", in: *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. XV - B. Paris: Lectoure 1950. Col 1841-1855.

that the world will realize that it was you who sent me, and that I have loved them as much as you loved me...³⁵²

The union of the faithful with the Trinity is modeled on the union of the Divine Persons within the Trinity, on their mutual Indwelling. This is the source of the ecclesial mission to which all are called. The first challenge of this is to live God's word, to keep the commandments. For anyone who does, 'God lives' in that person, and such a faithful believer lives in God [cf. 1 Jn 3:24].

This is seen as a "participation in the divine nature" [cf. 2 P 1:4] - and the Trinitarian presence within us is a 'personalist' reality:

... Each divine Person communicates Himself and swells in us as in a way proper to Him.³⁵³

... there has been a welcome renewal of the personalist aspect of divine grace, matched fortunately with a revival of the doctrine of the divine image...³⁵⁴

All activity finds its origin in the Father, the Source of all intra/extra Trinitarian life. In the created universe, the supreme model of the divine indwelling is the Incarnation:

... Among the external operations of God, the highest of all is the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, in which the splendor of the divine perfections shines forth so brightly that nothing more sublime can even be imagined, nothing else could have been more salutary to the human race..³⁵⁵

The redemptive mystery of Christ's Baptism reveals this special presence of the Trinity in His salvific Mission:

... No sooner had Jesus come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him ... And a voice came from heaven: You are my Son, the Beloved: my favor rests on him... [cf. Mk 1:9, ff.; Lk 3:21, f.].

³⁵² cf. Jn 17:20-23.

³⁵³ cf. Michael O' Carroll, C.S.Sp., *Trinitas. A Theological Encyclopedia of the Holy Trinity*. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, Inc. 1986, "Indwelling", p.134.

³⁵⁴ cf. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp., *Veni Creator Spiritus. A Theological Encyclopedia of the Holy Spirit* Collegeville MN: A Michael Glazier Book/The Liturgical Press 1990. "The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit", p. 108. cf. also O'Carroll, "Trinitas", ib., pp. 115, f.: "... Grace is intertwined with the doctrine of the divine image in man and on the divine indwelling in man..."

³⁵⁵ Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*. May 9, 1897, in: *The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903*, ed. by Claudia Carlen, IHM. Raleigh NC: A Consortium Book, McGrath Publishing Co. 1981, n. 4, p. 411.

With the Son's return to the Father at the end of His visible, earthly mission, the Spirit is sent through him as a gift to all:

... the proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit that cries: ABBA, Father! [cf. Ga 4:6].

This Indwelling, so much in accord with the personality of the Holy Spirit, is also seen as some kind of experiential knowledge - at least, the hint is present:

... we know that he lives in us by the Spirit he has given to us... [cf. I Jn 3:24].

... we can know that we are living in him and he is living in us because he let us share his Spirit ... we ourselves have known and out our faith in God's love toward ourselves. God is love and anyone who lives in love, lives in God and God lives in him... [cf. I Jn 4:13, 16].

In this union in the Holy Spirit, there is needed the "attitude" in the light of Paul' enjoinder: "put on the mind of Christ Jesus" [cf. Ph 2:5]. Paul motivates the Romans to this "spiritual" conduct, sharing the filiation of Jesus Christ:

... Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the spirit of Christ, you would not belong to him. Though your body is dead, it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you, then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him, who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you ... if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body, you will live... [cf. Rm 8:9, ff.]

As perseverance flows from the hope inspired through the gift of the Holy Spirit [cf. Rm 5:5, ff.], each is charged with guarding this treasure:

... you have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us ... [cf. 2 Tm 1:14].

The spirit of filiation shared with Christ in the Holy Spirit eliminates all differences and unifies the participants in the body of Christ:

... Didn't you realize that you were God's temple, and that the Spirit of God was living among you? ... The Temple of God is sacred, you are that temple... [cf. 1 Co 3:16, ff.].

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

... the temple of God has no common ground with idols, and that is what we are - the temple of the living God... [cf. 2 Co 6:16].

The "ecclesial" dimension of the divine indwelling has been insisted upon in papal documents:

... The Church, which already conceived, came forth from the side of the Second Adam in his sleep on the Cross, first showed herself before the eyes of man on the great day of Pentecost. On that day, the Holy Ghost began to manifest his gifts in the mystical body of Christ, by that miraculous out-pouring already foreseen by the Prophet Joel [2:28-29], for the Paraclete 'sat upon the Apostles as though new spiritual crowns were placed on their heads in tongues of fire...' (cf. St. Cyril of Jerus., Catech. 17)...³⁵⁶

The intimate association of the faithful believer with the presence of God within is variously described with a wide use of imagery from the created universe:

- from nature: the example of "living stones" built on the corner-stone risen to new life [cf. 1 P 2:4, ff.];

- from plant life: the vine and the branches [cf. Jn 15], and that fruit can only be produced in union with Him [cf. 1 Co 15:23, ff.];

- from the example of the one human body and its members [cf. 1 Co 12:12; Ep 2:15; Col 1:18];

- finally, the union of matrimony [cf. Ep 5:21, f.]. The "jealous" God yearns for totality:

... But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him... [cf. 1 Co 6:17].

... Surely you don't think scripture is wrong when it says: the Spirit which he sent to live in us wants us for himself alone... [cf. Jm 4:5]

The term "Indwelling" indicates the permanency of the Lord's presence:

... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we shall come to him and make our home with him... [cf. Jn 14:13].

The divine presence within the Church and its members is the assurance for the charism of truth entrusted to the Church, and the spring-board of her apostolic mission:

³⁵⁶ cf. Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, n. 5, p. 412. cf. also Vatican II, LG 3; SC 5

... the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you... [cf. Jn 14:26].

Pope Leo XII put it this way:

... Then the Apostles descended from the mountain, as St. John Chrysostom writes, 'not bearing in their hands tables of stone like Moses, but carrying the Spirit in their mind, and pouring forth the treasure and the fountain of doctrines and graces [In Mt., Hom. I, 2 Co 3:3]... This truth he communicates to his Church, guarding her by his all powerful help from ever falling into error, and aiding her to foster daily more and more the germ of divine doctrine and to make them more fruitful for all people...'³⁵⁷

Pope John Paul II echoes these sentiments, adding the dimension of the Risen Christ:

... the Second Vatican Council speaks of the Church's birth on the day of Pentecost. This event is the definitive manifestation of what had already been accomplished in the same Upper Room on Easter Sunday. The Risen Christ 'brought' to the Apostles the Holy Spirit...³⁵⁸

This: "guarding the treasure" is what is then handed on, as implementation of Christ's own mission received from the Father, communicated to the Apostles in the Holy Spirit:

... Peace be with you! When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side... Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so, I send you. And when he said this, he breathed on them and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit... [cf. Jn 20:19, ff.].

The "fact" of the Divine Indwelling is accepted as a "special treasure" of the Church. Its manner will be open for discussion - in some way, it is a share in the very nature of the divine persons and in their relationship within the Trinity:

... It must be borne in mind that there is a question here for a hidden mystery, which during this earthly exile can be simply seen through a veil, and which no human words can express. The Divine Persons are said to indwell inasmuch as they are present to beings endowed with intelligence in a way that lies beyond human comprehension, and in a unique and very

³⁵⁷ Pope Leo XIII, ib.

³⁵⁸ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Dominum et Vivificantem*. May 18, 1986, n. 25.

intimate manner, which transcends all created nature, these creatures enter into a relationship with them through knowledge and love...³⁵⁹

Fr. Aumann describes the terms of this mystery:

... we are one with God by the formal and physical participation of his divine nature, which participation is nothing other than sanctifying grace...³⁶⁰

Pope John Paul II presents the mystery in these terms:

... Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, this inner 'spiritual' man matures and grows strong. Thanks to the divine Self-communication, the human spirit which 'knows the secrets of man' meets the Spirit who searches everything, even the depths of God.' In this Spirit, who is the eternal Gift, the triune God opens himself to man, to the human spirit...³⁶¹

This is the most sublime perfection of a human being and each is called to increase this likeness:

... Man's intimate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit also enables him to understand himself, his own humanity, in a new way. Thus, that unique image and likeness of God which man is from his very beginning is fully realized...³⁶²

MISSIONARY CONTEMPLATION

This supreme gift of God asks for cooperation, a response on the part of the recipient. The mystery of the Triune God within enables one to "treasure" in the heart [cf. Lk 2:19, 51], developing an experiential knowledge of the presence of the Most High. Each recipient is capacitated, empowered to dynamic progress, leading to a healing transformation. The mutual inherence results in an identification of what is willed in the Divine Plan.

There is in this the cooperation of understanding and loving:

... In this Divine Indwelling, the most Holy Trinity is really and substantially present in the souls of the just by reason of sanctifying grace: not precisely

³⁵⁹ Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, June 29, 1943, in: *The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958*. Ed. by Claudia Carlen, IHM. Raleigh NC. A Consortium Book. McGrath Publishing Co., 1981, p. 53.

³⁶⁰ J. Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*. p. 77.

³⁶¹ cf. Pope John Paul II, *Dominicum et Vivificantem*, # 58.

³⁶² *ib.*, # 59.

in so far as it is an effect of God, but by reason of the operations [or habits] of love and knowledge, of which grace is the root...³⁶³

In the traditional Thomistic view, grace elevates the soul, and faith infused the mind, while hope and charity infuse the will. Charity inspires the frequent thought about God, by uniting to Him. This frequent, loving thought leads to a sense of joy in coming to grasp more and more just in knowing the goodness of God. From a simple thought in the mind, under the impulse of charity, one is led toward God, to pondering the profound secrets of His loving Being and Plan. This penetrating knowledge becomes intimate contact, and all reinforce union with God.³⁶⁴

As in St. Paul's "obedience of faith" [cf. Rm 16:26; 2 Co 10:5, f., as quoted by DV 5], there is an intimate cooperation with the grace of God in the exercise of the theological life. This "contemplation" develops under the impulse of charity, with the scope of intensifying fervor, and strengthening union. Such mental reflection, without love, could be mere theoretical and speculative thought, but not prayer, or meditation. It is not so much that emphasis is given to the discovery of the "new", or the novel, as it is to grasp better the mysteries of God and His Plan. The wisdom and goodness of God are already known and experienced.³⁶⁵

In the earlier levels of this loving contemplation, it is not enough simply to call to mind some thought about God, but there is motivated a deeper reflection, to make some judgment on this, to bring the matter of faith to the most clear insight possible. When this contemplation is "infused", there is a greater insertion into this mystery. This is the realm of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that come to supply for the deficiency before the Almighty, and to heal wounded nature. There is given a new ability, the mind and heart are raised to a new height, gifted with a more precise knowledge of God and His plan.³⁶⁶

It is through wisdom that the believer comes to learn more sublimely and more intensely about God, and His will. As wisdom works in harmony with the active exercise of charity - which, in turn, realizes union with the loving God ³⁶⁷. While wisdom does flow from charity as from its source, it is still an exercise of knowledge.

³⁶³ Francis L. B. Cunningham, OP, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*. Dubuque: The Priory Press 1955, pp. 191, ff.

³⁶⁴ cf. H. D. Gardeil, OP - H.D. Noble, OP, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin. Somme Théologique. La Charité*. [Fr. tr. - Gardeil; notes and appendices, Noble]. Tome II, II-II, qq. 27-33. Paris: Descellée 1967, p. 379, n. 4.

³⁶⁵ cf. Gardeil-Noble, ib., pp. 381, ff.

³⁶⁶ cf. ib., pp. 382, ff.

³⁶⁷ cf. ib., pp. 384, ff.

Its act is to contemplate the divine realities that are loved, and beginning with these, it makes its judgment on all else³⁶⁸.

These views lead to this succinct description:

... A quasi experimental knowledge, springing from the love and knowledge rooted in grace, is the proximate formal reason for the divine indwelling...³⁶⁹

This loving knowledge, rooted in grace, attains the Divine Persons as present. It is something like sense experience, involving a sympathy for the object and an affinity for It: in this case, God and His Plan.³⁷⁰ The effects of grace are experienced and tasted, by a sort of contact, that goes beyond speculation and abstraction.³⁷¹

In all of this, the concepts that come from faith are the medium by which the content of revelation is contemplated and studied. Charity, however, orders one so engaged more radically to the inner secrets of God. By a kind of intuition, there intensifies a truly spiritual, experiential knowledge of "the things of God." The simple state of grace is already moved toward a relationship with the presence of God within.³⁷²

In this sublime union, God enters into an objective, real and intimate contact with the believer. Known in the obscurity of faith, this is elevated by an intimate experience of loving understanding. So, it is not simply the knowledge of God, but one that is elevated by the exercise of the Gift of Wisdom, that is moved by charity. This affects a certain union and "connaturality". It is not only learning, but, in a certain sense, enduring, suffering the divinity. However, the experimental knowledge of God is not reserved for eternity, but begins on earth in the pilgrimage toward the heavenly home.³⁷³

As is commonly said, grace is a "life", that begins here, and is "changed" in death, but not ended. It is shared with the risen Christ, like flowing from the main stock, or like placing stones as near as possible to the living, life-giving Corner stone:

³⁶⁸ cf. H. D. Gardeil, OP - V. Vergriete, OP, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin. Somme Théologique. La Caraïte'*. Tome III, II-II, qq. 34-36. Paris: Descellée 1963, p. 406.

³⁶⁹ cf. Cunningham, *The Divine Indwelling*. p. 196.

³⁷⁰ cf. ib., p. 198.

³⁷¹ cf. ib., p. 201.

³⁷² cf. H. F. Dondaine, OP, *St. Thomas d'Aquin. Somme Théologique. La Trinite'*. I, qq. 33-43. Paris: Descellée 1962, p. 448.

³⁷³ cf. Gardeil - Vergriete, *La Charité'*. Tome III, pp. 407, ff.

... Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith and then, planted in love and built in love, you will, with all the saints, have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of god... [cf. Ep 3:14, ff.].

The Church is called to advance always toward the plenitude of divine truth until eventually the words of god are fulfilled [cf. DV 8]:

... for Christian spiritual life consists in being led into the sphere of the Trinity, in becoming a son of the Father, a brother of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit...³⁷⁴

This is the heart of prayer, to discover the splendor of the Trinity, the archetype of all beauty and love - the Divine Three constantly beckoning for an exchange of love.³⁷⁵ The "oneness" to which the Church and all are called is a communion with the Three, an eternal exchange of love. The fullness of personal existence coincides with the fullness of the exchange of gifts.³⁷⁶

This is a call to "New Life" in Christ Jesus:

... the Good News that Jesus came to give us is that the Kingdom of God is truly within us. It is the inner, hidden, dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, given to us in Baptism in an embryonic relationship whereby through the inner operations of the Spirit upon us in faith, hope and love, we become more and more aware that we live a new life in Christ Jesus...³⁷⁷

With the central image of the Trinity being one of knowing and loving relationships, this dynamism is infused into each one participating in the divine nature [cf. 2 P 1:4].

The Divine Persons, in an eternal exchange of knowledge and love, come to dwell within the human person, in a new and special way. They "come" not only to give life, but also to establish something like an experimental union. there is a kind of "seal" that communicates the special virtue of the Divine persons, and each recipient is orientated toward the eternal enjoyment of what has been begun. A personal energy is communicated to the faithful. This divine action is variously described as a

³⁷⁴ Jean Danielou, SJ, *God's Life in Us*. Denville NJ: Dimension Books Inc. 1969, p. 43.

³⁷⁵ cf. ib., p. 32.

³⁷⁶ cf. ib., pp. 48, ff.

³⁷⁷ cf. George Maloney, SJ, *Invaded by God. Mysticism and the Indwelling Trinity*. London: Sheed & Ward 1980, pp. 155, ff.

divine "touch", inspiring a reaction of loving contemplation and commitment to the things of God.³⁷⁸

There is initiated a tension toward ever deeper union, which shows the supremacy of charity over faith and hope: these latter place one in relationship with God directly, whereas charity, inspiring loving contemplation, achieves a living union meant to develop. In loving contemplation, distance from God is progressively overcome, in so far as this is possible to a creature. All will be perfected in response to the effort under grace. The faithful believer comes to hand over all of one's being to the Most High, in an abandonment to the Divine Will. There is a compenetration of God's Will into that of human beings.³⁷⁹

This intimate "friendship" with God brings with it a unifying power with loving contemplation, one's thought penetrate more and more into the reality of God and His interests. This interior union, accompanied by interior joy, intensifies the unification of the Will of God. Gradually, an ever deeper perception is achieved.³⁸⁰

From his earliest writings, St. Thomas considered the divine indwelling as the presence of God operating within the faithful believer. This presence of God is within His chose, and this "choice" is offered to each and every one. Grace inspires an authentic dynamism within anyone properly open to this life of union and its challenges. This "new" divine presence reaches the creature in the totality of his/her human being.³⁸¹

In order to achieve this in its totality, there is necessary life-long conversion, transformation. The life of grace that is allowed to flourish within, by being cooperated with constantly works to achieve this elevation of each person to an ever more intense union. This grace is a share in the very being of God, and is in accord with the innate capacity and developing disposition of the recipient. It remains a special and positive good within each one.³⁸²

With charity, its place in the life within is that of deepening the relationship with the Trinity through gradual purification, and contributing to loving contemplation. A mutual development takes place between mind and heart, intellect and will: the knowledge of God becomes more and more both the object and motive for charity. Through the joy that results, the yearning for eternity develops. He

³⁷⁸ cf. Dondaine, *La Trinite'*. Tome II, p. 450.

³⁷⁹ cf. Gardeil-Noble, *La Charité'*. Tome II, p. 375.

³⁸⁰ cf. ib., p. 391.

³⁸¹ cf. Dondaine, *La Trinite'*. Tome II, pp. 442, ff.

³⁸² cf. R. Mulled, OP, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin. Somme Théologique. La Grace*. I-II, qq. 109-114. [Fr. tr]. Paris: Descellée 1948, 2nd ed., pp. 307, ff.

authentic "gnosis" of God is also the "theory" of God, knowledge becomes contemplation.³⁸³ The "wounds" of mind and will, of the soul, are healed - and what is healed is elevated.³⁸⁴

The great challenge for the committed believer is to learn the will of God, and then do it. The Trinity dwelling within adapts divine knowledge and love for to be operative, productive in the life of the creature.³⁸⁵ With all the difficulties that accompany the Thomistic view, it appears quite clear that the divine operative presence within leads to ever more intense union of wills, "on earth as it is in heaven". This unifying charity is intensified also by loving contemplation that is then communicated, shared with others. Along with a sublime benevolence, love is also communion, identification in as much as this is possible in the lives of those who love one another. Here we touch the very mystery of divine love, which is an on-going, intensifying experience, adherence and inherence between the divine and human.³⁸⁶

Love serves as the font for all this activity of contemplating also for the benefit of others. This leads to an eternal elevation and continuation of what has been begun. This love helps to bring into clearer focus a superior level of knowledge and affectivity. Love, in some way, brings the beloved within the lover. This is achieved through an intimate bond between mind and heart. The beloved adheres more and more to the person loving, by a mutual interiorization.³⁸⁷ Identification of wills is the hoped-for goal, imperfect for as long as life lasts, and relatively perfected for eternity. This reciprocal harmony in love leads to the unification of wills in the divine plan.³⁸⁸

Abandoning oneself to the divine plan, union is achieved by committing one's entire self to the divine word [cf. DV 5]. This requires the intention of conformity and at least an implicit and virtual submission to the divine will as the initial unification of mind and heart with God. While human life has its daily requirements, tedious tasks and urgent demands that tend to "fragment" one, loving contemplation is a way to unify, harmonize one's commitment.³⁸⁹

³⁸³ *Charité' : La Place de la charité' dans la vie spirituelle. Rapports avec la purification et avec la contemplation.* In: *Dictionnaire de la Spiritualité'*. Paris; Beauchesne. Col. 551-558, passim.

³⁸⁴ cf. Mulard, *La Grace*, p. 314.

³⁸⁵ cf. Dondaine, *La Trinite'*, Tome II, pp. 439, ff.

³⁸⁶ cf. Gardeil - Noble,, *La Charité'*. Tome II, pp. 363, f.; cf. also Note 8, pp. 227, f.

³⁸⁷ *ib.*, pp. 367, ff.

³⁸⁸ *ib.*, p. 371.

³⁸⁹ *ib.*, pp. 388, f.

A CONTEMPLATIVE MISSION

... What we have seen and heard, we are telling you so that you, too, may be in union with us, as we are in union with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ... [cf. 1 Jn 1:3].

True witness presupposes some knowledge of the event, and basic truthfulness. Each of the baptized is called to this, to further the mission as described by Pope John Paul II:

... Along the path of an inner maturity, which includes the full discovery of the meaning of humanity - God comes close to man, and permeates more and more completely the whole human world. The Triune God, Who 'exists' in himself as a transcendent reality of inter-personal gift, giving himself in the Holy Spirit as gift to man, transforms the human world from within, from inside hearts and minds...³⁹⁰

All missions in the Church are a cooperation with the prolongation in time of the eternal generation and procession within the Trinity:

... The Mission of the Spirit at Pentecost was thus described in a promise: 'But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you... [cf. Jn 14:26; cf. Lk 24:29; Ac 1:4-5...]³⁹¹

Even with ordinary talent, union with God enables one to respond in an extraordinary manner. Within every human person there is a capacity that remains latent, but responds to the touch of the Primary Agent, the Ultimate Cause. This "obediential power of submission" in the hands of God can accomplish wonders for the Kingdom.³⁹²

There is indeed a definite ecclesiality in the Apostolic Mission, already noted in the image of the Indwelling:

... Vatican Council II makes a special point of the fact that among the various biblical images of the Church [sheepfold of Christ, tract of land to be cultivated, a choice vineyard, a beloved bride, temple of the Spirit], the last is most commonly used...³⁹³

³⁹⁰ cf. Pope John Paul II *Dominum et Vivificantem*, n. 59.

³⁹¹ cf. O'Carroll, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, p. 12.

³⁹² cf. Mullard, *La Grace*, p. 327.

³⁹³ cf. Thomas Dubay, SM, *God Within Us*. Denville NJ: Dimension Books 1971, pp. 85, f.

The ecclesial mission is begun with baptism, where the divine presence is communicated, inaugurated.³⁹⁴ The consequence of the extension of the internal and external missions within the Trinity is an intimate, holy beatifying union of the believer with the divine Persons. The Mission of the Divine Son brought an entirely new aspect of God, Father, and Holy Spirit. This Mission comes throughout history as the continuation of the eternal missions within the trinity and as a promise of eternal union.³⁹⁵

... When Vatican II set out to explain the missionary activity of the Church, it begins with the inter Trinitarian life. After noting that the pilgrim *ecclesia* is missionary by nature, the Council continues ... [AG 2]... not only is the Triune Lord the origin of the ecclesial mission, he is the primordial cause of fecundity...³⁹⁶

There are diverse tendencies of the love of God: one is a real taste, hunger and thirst for contemplation, leading to a more committed love for one's neighbor, along with a certain happiness with the order of the universe - so severely under attack in our own time. Through loving contemplation, the believer is pushed to exterior action in behalf of others, and also for the preservation of the planet earth. While there develops a most confident sense of abandonment to Divine Providence, there is instilled an attitude of biblical hope, with zeal for the divine glory.³⁹⁷ Union with God, and the almost experimental knowledge of the Trinity, brings with it a special sense of the relationship with the Divine persons who are sent.³⁹⁸

Friendship with God is essentially the aspiration of achieving harmony, unity. This affectionate reflection on the Trinity transforms the quality of the prayer within the Church. Abandonment to the divine will increases hand in hand with hope-filled zeal.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁴ cf. Dondaine, *La Trinite'*, Tome II, pp. 449, ff.. cf. also Dubay, o.c., p. 115: "... as a consequence of the close relationship between this new creation and the divine abiding of the Trinity, it follows that as one growing race, he likewise grows in his capacity to know, love, enjoy the Father, Son and Spirit..."

³⁹⁵ cf. Alexis Benigar, OFM, *Theologia Spiritualis*. Roma: Secretaria Missionum OFM 1964, pp. 112-119, passim.

³⁹⁶ cf. Dubay, *God within Us*. p.146; cf. also p. 115.

³⁹⁷ cf. Guy de Broglie, SJ, *Charité'*. VIII. *Essai d'une synthèse doctrinale*. C. *Tendance de l'amour de Dieu*, in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité'* Pars: Beauchesne Col. 668, ff.

³⁹⁸ cf. Gardeil- Vergriete, *La Charité'*. Tome III, p. 409.

³⁹⁹ cf. Guy de Broglie, ib., Col. 617.

CONCLUSION

...The transfiguration of the temple is modeled after the very pattern of the Risen *Kyrios*. The risen Lord remains the corner-stone of the spiritual house... Jesus will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body... [cf. Ph 3:21].⁴⁰⁰

This is simply the fulfillment of the hope that is enunciated to the Romans and to all:

... These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us... [cf. Rm 5:4, ff.].

... Though your body is dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you, then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his spirit living in you... And if we are children, we are heirs as well, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, sharing his suffering, so as to share his glory... [cf. Rm 8:9, ff.].

Grace "divinizes" human beings, ordaining the mind and heart through the theological life toward the eternal, loving contemplation of God.⁴⁰¹ Charity tends to unite one to God and will lead to the eternal vision and loving contemplation of the inner-most secrets of God.⁴⁰² There is no such reality as a "static" image of God - the human being is "naturally capable of God", and Jesus Christ in some way, is united to everyone [cf. GS 22]. The infusion of charity is a kind of communication of beatitude.⁴⁰³

Pope Leo XII offers this rich insight:

... God, by grace, resides in the just soul as in a temple, in a most intimate and peculiar manner. From this proceeds that union of affection by which the soul adheres most closely to God, more so than the friend is united to his most loving and beloved friend, and enjoys God in all fullness and sweetness. Now this wonderful union, which is properly called 'indwelling', differing only in degree or state from that which God beatifies the saints in heaven, although it is most certainly produced by the presence of the whole

⁴⁰⁰ cf. Dubay, *God Within Us*, p. 215.

⁴⁰¹ cf. Dondaine, *La Trinite'*, Tome II, p. 447.

⁴⁰² cf. Gardeil-Noble, *La Charité'*, Tome II, p. 379.

⁴⁰³ cf. L.B. Gillon, OP, "Charité", *Les grands écoles: Dominicain*, in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*. Paris: Beauchesne Col. 581.

Blessed Trinity: 'We will come to them and make our abode with them' [Jn 14:23] - nevertheless, it is attributed in a particular manner to the Holy Spirit.... By means of the seven Gifts the soul is excited and encouraged to seek after the evangelical beatitudes, which like flowers that come forth in the spring time, are the signs and harbingers of eternal beatitude...⁴⁰⁴

In eternity,, the loving contemplation of the three Persons will be "perfected":

... St. Thomas calls grace 'the beginning of glory', and St. Irenaeus designates it as 'the seed of the Father'. Therefore, when we speak of perfection, or sanctification as a proximate goal of the spiritual life, we are referring not to any specific degree of perfection at a given moment, but to the ideal placed before all Christians by Christ Himself: 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength' [Mk 12:30]. This is the goal of the spiritual life received through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit...⁴⁰⁵

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The End

⁴⁰⁴ cf. Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, n. 9, p. 414.

⁴⁰⁵ cf. Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*, p. 47 - the Conclusion to Part I, c. 2: "The Goal of our Striving."