

STIGMATINE DEVOTIONS



The Holy Espousals of Mary and Joseph and the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ: the main devotions of St. Gaspar Bertoni

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¹ www.st-bertoni.com

[A] BALANCED, *INTEGRAL* DEVOTIONS

Presentation

[1] It has been said that years of study without prayer could make a person proud – and the converse: prayer without study, might make a person ‘funny.’² St. Gaspar Bertoni’s insistence on a **balance** between his ideal of intense spirituality and true and fervent devotion³ – is what enables his idea of *Contemplata tradere* [CF # 49] he hoped for more than ordinary knowledge.

[a] **CF # 59.** A special and careful program is to be set up for those who are dedicated to studies, both so that their **health** may experience no harm, and also so that their **necessary comfort** might not be lacking. As a result, the Superior should be vigilant so that they might have decent food and clothing, as well as the necessary recreation. He is to see to it that the students might be **free from all concern and solicitude** about these matters, so that they might the **more easily bear the burden of their studies, and be content in religious moderation.**

[b] **CF # 62.** It will be incumbent upon the Superior to see to it that the Scholastics do not study in those times harmful to their **physical health**. They will be provided with that amount of time that will be necessary for their **sleep**, so that they might be able to maintain a certain balance in their mental endeavors **so that they might persevere longer in acquiring and exercising the necessary learning for the service of the Church.**

[c] **CF # 65.** All the members will protect their upright way of life and the proper intention for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. **For no one, without a pure mind and the imitation of the Saints, will ever grasp the words of the Saints**, says St. Athanasias [*De Incarn.* near the end]. All should **pray often to God**, Who is the Lord of all knowledge [1 S 2:3] that He might grant to them the necessary knowledge.

[d] **CF # 66.** It will be up to the Superiors to see to it that neither the **love for piety** will be cooled through the **fervor of studies**, nor that through any excess of piety, will the necessary studies be impeded.

[e] **CF # 126.** In their studies, they will also observe the prescribed schedule, so that they will not study, or read, or write, or meditate, before, nor after the time established. They will also keep to the place and the manner and the other circumstances required **in studying, in accord with the norm of obedience.**

[f] **CF # 127.** They will also keep that order **so that they do not prefer knowledge over the spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation, spiritual reading and the required examinations of conscience, and other similar exercises.** Neither should they place studies ahead of **religious discipline** or the orders of Superiors. They should always be prepared to interrupt them immediately, even totally, at the hint of the Superiors, they should be willing to give up studies

² Cf. r. KNOX, *Enthusiasm*.

³ cf. CF ## 59; 62; 65; 66; 126; 127; 162; 173; 180.

altogether already undertaken, according to that line in the Psalm: '**Teach me wisdom and knowledge.**' [cf. **Ps 118:66**].

[g] **CF # 166.** Wherever it is possible, it is fitting that our men also assist in the education of the youth. In this ministry, there is to be observed that principle taken from the Shorter Rules of St. Basil: 'Since the Apostle has said: **And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but rear them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord [Ep 6:4]** - then, any of our men who teach the young, may they lead them with this mentality. May those who do instruct the youth **be fully confident that they indeed can form these students, educating them in the discipline and the correction of the Lord.** May our men observe the Lord's own precept: **Let the little children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven [Mt 19:14]**. If any such ideal and hope are not present, then I think that this endeavor would not be pleasing to God, nor would it be proper, or advantageous for us.

[h] **CF # 173.** The beginning of school, and the individual classes should be **introduced by a public prayer**. The young people are to be taught that this brief prayer has **two purposes**: one is that **they offer up to God all their school work**, and in particular their time and activity. The second goal is that the students **accustom themselves to beg from God the grace to profit by these studies**. This practice can prove to be very useful for the other activities of life.

[j] **CF # 180.** It is very useful to propose and to bestow **rewards** or honors to the extern students for the sake of **encouraging fervor in their studies**. In all these matters, propriety and a religious sense are to be observed.

[2] Within the Church herself there has been a well-chartered quest for the proper balance between academic freedom and the Church's right to know the teaching of Jesus Christ – the challenge between leaping forward with support entrenched in the Tradition – an integration between renewal and Fidelity: in the official Magisterium was much influenced by Pope Paul VI's title of his *Motu Proprio* of December 7, 1965: **INTEGRAE SERVANDAE**, in which the name and the regulations of the old 'Holy Office' were changed. The basic operating principle is noted in the opening paragraph of this document: the roman Pontiffs, in union with the Episcopal body, have guarded over the course of the centuries and in the midst of human vicissitudes the Deposit of the Revealed Religion, entrusted to them by God, in order that it be conserved **integrally** and so it is that they have transmitted this **intact** even up through our present time ... ⁴ The tendency has been to make use of the word **integral** in matters of faith and morals in harmony with the Word of God understood over the centuries in the tradition of the Church. The effort has also been to show the positive intervention of the Church in the matter of teaching the truth – there are clearly heretical teachings; but the condemnation of one as a 'heretic' has been avoided.

⁴ Cf. EV 2, n. 479

[a] The Church reiterates this in her Declaration of Feb. 15, 1975⁵: The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in fulfilling its proper task of **promoting and protecting the Doctrine of the Faith, and the customs of the entire Church** – needs to exercise vigilance.⁶

[b] The Congregation issued another Declaration in the same regard on December 15, 1979⁷ in which there is made clear: The Church of Christ has received from God the mandate of guarding and protecting the Deposit of the faith, so that all the faithful under the guidance of her Sacred Magisterium, through which the Person of Christ the Teacher par excellence, acts in the Church so that all might adhere indefectibly to the faith transmitted to the believers once and for all that all might penetrate more deeply into this and more fully may apply it to life ... the specific scope of the Magisterium is to conserve, penetrate ever more profoundly, to expose, teach, defend the Sacred Deposit of Revelation; that is, to illumine the life of the Church and humanity through divine truth.

[c] A few months later⁸, Pope John Paul II wrote an extended letter to the German Hierarchy, removing the ‘mandate to teach Catholic Theology’. Among the statements noted here, the Holy father addressed this rhetorical question: Regarding the assignment of teaching of Professor Kung, these following questions need to be posited: a theologian, **who does not accept integrally the Doctrine of the Church**, does he still have the right of teaching in the Name of the Church and on the basis of the special mission received by her?

[d] The Congregation then sent a letter to the Dominican theologian, Fr. E. Schillebeeckx, on November 20, 1980⁹ making known to him that several theological points in his published works remained ambiguous on some fundamental points of the Catholic faith – inviting him to an open colloquy as serious doubts remained regarding his teaching.

[e] Another letter to Fr. Schillebeeckx was forthcoming from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on June 13, 1984¹⁰ – this time on the author ideas concerning the Priesthood. In this letter the Congregation declared that the time of discussion had passed, and that of decision had arrived – and that he was obliged to accept the teachings of the Church also in this matter.

[f] The definitive letter of the Congregation to Fr. Schillebeeckx bears the date of September 15, 1986¹¹ in which it is declared that the author’s opinions on certain matters regarding the Sacrament of Holy Order and priestly ministry in the

⁵ Declaration regarding two works of Fr. Hans Kung.

⁶ EV 5 n. 1089

⁷ Declaration regarding further works and other opinions of Fr. H. Kung.

⁸ To the German Bishops, regarding Fr. H. Kung, on May 15, 1980 – EV nn. 374-399

⁹ cf. EV 7, nn. 830-838],

¹⁰ cf. EV 9, nn. 830-836]

¹¹ cf/ EV 10. nn. 894- 901

Church. The Congregation cites DV 12, § 3 in which it is declared that scholars need to ponder the exact sense of the sacred texts, and hold to the content and to the unity of all of sacred Scripture – and need to keep in mind the living tradition of the whole Church and the analogy of faith. The teaching contained in a number of the Dutch theologian's works remain in disaccord with the teaching of the Church.

[f] The end result of these and other discussions led to the publication by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, an ***Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian***, May 24, 1990¹², Feast of the Ascension. In the course of this document, it is taught: ***... By virtue of the divine mandate given to it in the Church, the Magisterium has the mission to set forth the Gospel's teaching, guard its integrity, and hereby protect the faith of the People of God... This judgment does not concern the person of the theologian, but the intellectual positions publicly espoused.*** [n. 37].

[3] The recent Magisterium has also taught repeatedly the **integrality** of the Paschal Mystery:

'1. From her very beginning the Church has professed faith in the Lord, **crucified and risen**, and has gathered the fundamental contents of her belief into certain formulas. The central event of the **death and resurrection** of the Lord Jesus, expressed first in simple formulas, and subsequently in formulas that were more developed¹³, made it possible to give life to that uninterrupted proclamation of faith, in which the Church has handed on both what had been received from the lips of Christ and from His works, as well as what had been learned **at the prompting of the Holy Spirit**' [DV 7].

'The same NT is the singular witness of the first profession proclaimed by the disciples immediately after the events of Easter: ***For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Jesus died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve.***' [1 Co 15:3-5].¹⁴

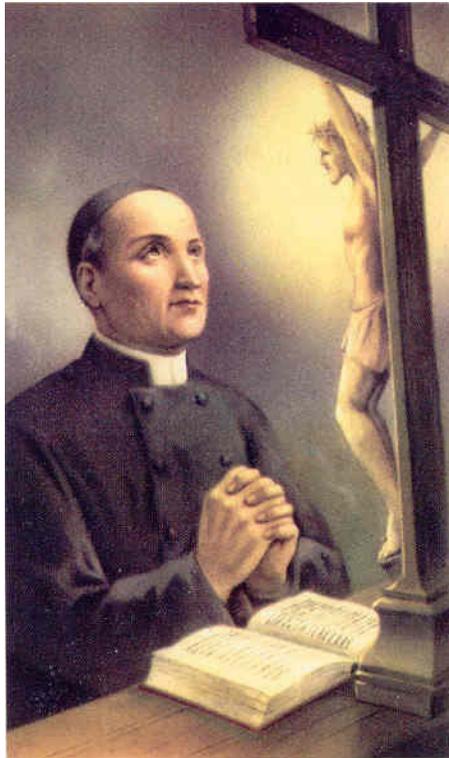
This is the **integral Paschal Mystery**, worshipped in St. Gaspar Bertoni's Genuine Devotion to the Stigmata: **believed, celebrated and lived.**

¹² Congregazione per la dottrina della fede, *'Donum Veritatis'/ Istruzione e Commenti.* Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1993.

¹³ The simple formulas normally profess the messianic fulfillment of Jesus of Nazareth; e.g., Mk 8:29; Mt 16:16; Lk 9:20; Jn 20:31; Ac 9:22. The complex formulas, in addition to the resurrection, confess the principal events of the life of Jesus and their salvific meaning, e.g., Mk 12:35-36; Ac 2:23-24; 1 Co 15:3-5; 1 Co 16:22; Ph 2:7, 10-11; Col 1:15-20; 1 P 3:19-22; Rv 22:20. Besides the formulas of confession of faith relating to salvation history and to the historical event of Jesus of Nazareth which culminates with Easter, there are professions of faith in the NT which concern the very being of Jesus, cf. 1 Co 12:3: ***Jesus is Lord.*** In Rm 10:9, the two forms of confession are found together.

¹⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Texts of the Magisterium regarding the Professio Fidei.* 1998.

ST. GASPAR BERTONI



NOVEMBER 4, 1816

A CREATIVE SYNTHESIS OF REALISM AND HOPE

Rev. Joseph Charles Henchey, CSS

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ABBREVIATIONS, QUOTATIONS AND NOTES USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Abbreviation or Quotation	Meaning
f. (ff.)	Follow page(s) or verse(s)
Ibi (or "ib")	It is an abbreviation of the Latin " <i>ibidem</i> ", and is an editorial short-cut, which means: there; in the same place.
MssB	Manoscritti Bertoniiani - all typed in five volumes by Fr. Luigi Benaglia, CSS - these are all the writings of Fr. Bertoni - they have also been printed out by computer in five volumes with marginal numbers for easy reference.
NB	NOTA BENE [<i>"note well!"</i> - <i>"pay attention!"</i>]- usually used in English and Italian manuscripts - from the Latin]
p. (pp.)	Page(s)
Ps (Pss)	Psalm(s)
Psalms number	The Psalm number refers always to the Latin Vulgate. When are quoted two numbers, the second one refers to the modern Bibles, where the Psalm 9 was divided into two.
q. (qq.)	These are abbreviations for: <i>Question/Questions</i> - these are abbreviations usually used with St. Thomas Aquinas.
ss.	Follow pages (or verses) [from the Italian <i>sequenti</i>]
v. (vv.)	Verse(s) of the Sacred Scripture
Notes	Meaning
Footnotes	Author's complementary notes regarding terms and nouns used in this document, in numeral sequence (1, 2, 3...), in the same page (or following), at the bottom.
Endnotes	Author's complementary notes regarding terms and nouns used in this document, in Roman numeral sequence (I, II, III, IV...) at the end of the document.

Introduction

[1] It was a time of year – almost two centuries ago – when Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, Fr. John Mary Marani and Bro. Paul Zanoli – the first Stigmatines – came to live the beginnings of the Stigmatine life, in the Church of the Stigmata of St. Francis, in Verona, Italy. More and more the days were shortening – one liturgical year was in its last weeks – and the hours of darkness surpassed the hours of sun light. These first three men were soon to be followed by a trickle of other men with like-minded ideals. This event started the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Their lives were marked with a clear balance between darkness and the hoped-for light of a New Advent in their lives, a new beginning – the long winter of life, would give way in grace to a renewed spring-time in the Resurrection.

[2] A central inspiration of the early Stigmatines living at the *Stimate* in Verona, repeatedly surfacing in the life of the Founder would be the Five Wounds of Jesus Christ – sorrowfully received on Good Friday with great suffering – and gloriously retained in His Risen Body on Easter night, as the Source of the Apostolic Mission. In showing His five wounds, Jesus sent the Apostles on the same Personal Mission He had eternally received from his Father [cf. Jn 20:21, ff.]. Along with this, the Community early began to celebrate their Patronal Fest of the Holy Espousals of Mary and Joseph.

[3] One fact above stands out in this history: the Stigmatine Community has truly experienced the Sacred Stigmata in its nearly 200 year life, and for more than 99 years in this country: the 'Sorrowful' Good Friday aspect, in the enormous sufferings the Community has endured - the many pre-mature losses of dear and competent men - and the failures of not a few hopes. The 'Glorious', Easter aspect has been most evident as well: the undying hope in the resurrection, with its extraordinary commitment to the Apostolic Mission, living out in practice the words of Jesus on Easter night, when He manifested His Sacred Stigmata in the Cenacle room with this Apostolic Missionary Mandate: **As** *the Father has sent me, I **now** send you!* [cf. Jn 20:19, ff.].

[4] There is a distinct experience we all gain in serving Jesus Christ. This is a share in His unique relationship with His Father. In his transcription of the Meditations of St. Gregory the Great preached to the Seminarians of Verona commenting on First Kings [1 S] ¹⁵, the Stigmatine Founder uses themes that are now quite familiar to us.

¹⁵ Fr. Bertoni was always most challenging in his ideal for a more than ordinary knowledge [cf. CF ## 49;50;151]:

5012: There needs to be desires to learn the Science of the Saints in order to convert sinners, to watch over the just, and to advance in union with God. [Med 7]

5093: *Give us this day our daily bread*: Our Bread is Christ. Give us a great knowledge of His excellence, so that we might ever more yearn to serve Him, in order to be able to know him the better. [Med 8] [With Fr. Bertoni's constant emphasis on service_of the Lord, and the Church [cf.

Fr. Bertoni's unique bond with Jesus Christ is the source of our Stigmatine Vocation: seeing the Sacred Stigmata as our means of preparing for the Eternal Nuptials with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Fr. Bertoni noted this in his Meditations on First Kings – trials are the source of new life:

Med. 6: 4985: *But Anna went not up: for she said to her husband: [v. 22].*

Anna is invited to share in this solemn oblation, because the holy Church by the spiritual exhortation of her Spouse is enkindled from the daily desires of love to the eternal contemplation of divine clarity.¹⁶

Med. 9: 5140: *So that the barren has borne many, and she that had many children is weakened. 1 K 2:5.*

***The weakened one:* this is the Synagogue [This is because] by the institution of the old law, it cannot bring to term. For she lost the faith of the first man, and this brings forth progeny to the devil, and not to God.**

***She that had many children:* Because while she was in the truth of the Scriptures, she brought up the people of old subject to her to yearn for the Advent of the coming Redeemer, and she brought forth children from her embrace of her Heavenly Spouse.**

A. A New Terminology

In order to summarize the one Eternal Word in the most expressive language, our own times emphasize even the prefixes of familiar words: as in Luke's Gospel [1:35], the Holy Spirit 'hovers', over-shadows' Mary. The Evangelist uses the same terminology as did the inspired author of the original creation story – and thus, Jesus' entire life is ***IN-spired*** by the 'Other' Paraclete; in Luke's Gethsemane story [22:44], we find that Jesus ***PER-spired*** His own Precious Blood [... *His sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood...*] – and John [19:30] describes Jesus' death as an ***EX-Spiration***, a further sending out of the Holy Spirit: [*...and bowing His head, He gave up His Spirit...!*] – in preparation for the coming Pentecost.

Our own journey of Redemption begins and unfolds with our ***DIS-figuration*** by Original and our own actual Sin - by God's Mercy, we are then ***CON-figured*** to Christ Jesus by Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist [Rm 6] – to be redeemed also by

obsequium], here the implication is that such total service leads to a kind of experience of the Lord [*epignosis?*].

5253: And this is the second benefit of temptation, the effect of the provident care of the Church, cooperating in the designs of the Spouse concerning the care of the Elect put to the test, and it is the science of discretion. The soul, by submitting itself to the Magisterium of the Church acquires this knowledge in temptation, which reforms the indiscretion of desires, while it makes us know our own strengths and determines the levels of the virtues that we have acquired, after having examined them as with a touch-stone. *What does he know who has not been tried?* Ecclus 34:9 [Med .12]

¹⁶ cf. MssB 4985.

the **TRANS-Figuration** of Jesus, Who tells us: *It was not for my sake that this Voice [from heaven] came but for yours!* [Jn 12:30].

Through long years of intense personal suffering before he died, Fr. Bertoni became the great prayerful mystic of helplessness, under the crucible of his terrible daily monotony. He served God and the Church as an invalid for more than 20 years: the prime of his life and apostolic productivity were taken from him; his was a near silver-jubilee of an accepted near-solitary confinement, alone day after day with his thoughts, his intense prayer, and his on-going self-giving in behalf of God's People, as the great Missionary of Abandonment to the Paschal Mystery throughout his entire life. His daily oblation was that of routine – he was the Apostle of life's dimness and drudgery – as he noted the Church herself lived, which for him was the Model of Holy Abandonment. He once wrote:

... This is the practice of the Spouse [of Christ] which the Church is. As she has already been assured by the divine promise of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, she does not ever giving up looking for the light in order to continue her work, or in defending the truth entrusted to her, or restoring discipline. And when she does see clearly, the Church never gives up working, studying, consulting, so that she might go proceed further under the light she receives...¹⁷

He worked always to dissipate the awful dark night of the apparent 'non-sense' of so many years of suffering – in the old Latin it could be said of St. Gaspar: his life-journey was Per ***Crucem ad Lucem – Nox illuminatio mea!*** Knowledge of the Crucified Christ [CF # 51] served as his compass toward the Eternal Nuptials with the Risen Lord. In addition to his lived balance between suffering and healing, between death and hope for a new life, Fr. Bertoni believed that his grace of commitment – his self-giving – his **self-emptying** led to a Holy Abandonment to God, with its ever greater availability as an ***oblation*** for the sake of the Church¹⁸ - would lead to eternal nuptial banquet with the Trinity.

¹⁷ Letter 38, October 26, 1813, in: *Epistolario*, p. 99

¹⁸ cf. his Meditation 2 on First Kings:

4891: *To adore and to offer sacrifice to the Lord God of Hosts in Silo. [1 K 1:3].*

The Man went up so that he could worship and offer sacrifice, because He wanted to be known for this, that in dying, He would redeem those whom He had taught by living. *He adored:* as an example for the chosen, He rendered Himself totally humble and abject through obedience to God the Father. *He offered sacrifice*, Who by living, offered examples of humility, He handed Himself over to God the Father on the altar of the Cross as an oblation and a host¹⁸, and those whom he taught by living, He redeemed by dying.

4894: Third Means: the Ministry of Priests ...

In Silo v. 3. This is the place of the immolation.

Silo: the word means "sent", or is interpreted "mission", indicating the imposed precept of the supreme Father, of obedience on His Only-Begotten.

The way life is lived, for St. Gaspar, is the best expression of the Stigmatine devotions which are always meant to lead to imitation. Giving oneself over to this ideal is the living out of the Stigmata of Christ – and this leads to a Holy Espousals, that will last forever, as the culmination of our life-long service of God in the Apostolic Mission – which sometimes will mean lengthy personal suffering. The permanence of the marriage of Mary and Joseph, the ideal of all living the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, served Fr. Bertoni also as a sign of that **eternal nuptials** of the Saints with the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Fr. Bertoni in his Meditations on First Kings notes that the marriage of the Lamb will lead us in the Church to eternal union¹⁹. As it is said that asceticism divides to conquer – as the old ***Imitation of Christ*** would remind us: if we were to gain one virtue a year, if we lived long enough we would be holy. The mysticism of the saints, then, through charity unites, ‘in-forms’ all that we are meant to be and to do.

To offer sacrifice in Silo: Because Christ in no other way gave Himself over to death than being sent by the Father. Jn 14:31: As the Father has given Me commandment, so do I... - Ph 2:8: ...becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross...

In Silo, he adored and offered sacrifice, because both in living as in dying, He did the Father’s Will.

[Fr. Bertoni took his central ideal from this view: Christ offering Himself as an oblation rendered by the *obsequium* [cf. Rm 12:1] – this ideal is found in a number of Fr. Bertoni’s *Original Constitutions*: [## 1; 7; 57; 62; 125; 185; 195; 237; 296; 304]. This revealed data of Jesus’ being sent by the Father, [Jn 14:3] is behind all Mission in the Church – and certainly is the heart of Fr. Bertoni’s Trinitarian charism of Hope. At St. Joseph’s Convent, Verona, he saw a painting of the Trinity, and noted that this explained to him Divine Mercy – with the Father’s ready communication of his gifts [cf. MP, Aug. 24, 1808. [cf. Bertoni Web-Site, under ‘Studies, *The Trinitarian Charism of Hope*. cf. below].

¹⁹ Vocation in the Church is life-long preparation, living of the Stigmata:

Med.6: 4905: *I am black but beautiful [Ct 1:4]. Do not consider me, that I am brown, because the sun has altered my color. [ib., v. 5]. - Solomon’s temple was built without noise [3 K 6:7]. – For the marriage of the Lamb has come and his wife has prepared herself. And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white. For the fine linen is the justification of saints.... [Apoc 19:7, ff].*

[The Wounded Lamb takes the Church as His Bride – for Fr. Bertoni, the Church is the Spouse of Christ, is the *Model of Holy Abandonment* cf. the Web-Site, under Translations, that of Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove’s Doctoral Thesis, bearing this title].

4980: *...She named him Samuel. v. 20.*

Those whom He justified, those He also glorified [Rm 8:30], in this life, the militant Church, symbolizes the triumphant Church, as the Synagogue symbolized the militant Church. He glorified with the name, with the gifts and with the infused virtues, with merits.

God gives to those whom He calls to any given state whatever is necessary for that state of life. Therefore, God has done much for His own. The Church, too, His Bride, we will see that she is not lacking in her own prudent and provident commitment.

[In his very important CF # 185 of the *Original Constitutions*, Fr. Bertoni makes clear that the difficult and arduous vocation of the Stigmatine is not based on human strength, but on the grace of the Holy Spirit, who has begun and inspired this good work [cf. Ph 1:6], and He will bring it to perfection if He is not hindered in this by us; for this is the special grace of this vocation...].

To reach his synthesis, Fr. Bertoni was much inspired by the Scriptures: all theological students know that the heart of all our studies is a proper, Church-centered **EX-egesis**, avoiding all **EIS-egesis** [a personal, subjective reading into God's Word]. The saints teach us a genuine **IN-egesis**, as an on-going process of finding Christ IN every verse. For the saints, the Divine Inspiration of God's Word is not comparable to His employing passive musical instruments to produce His symphony of truth – or inert paint brushes [as these can only produce a work of art, the closer they are to the hand and heart of the Divine Artist]. Rather, the Creative God, sanctifying humanity with His redemptive word, inspired the artists of human language to express Divine Truth, in both word and deed, through charisms lived in the Church. The Bible for St. Gaspar is a symphony of truth of the Old and New Testaments; the harmony between history and prophecy; there is divine blending found in the Gospels and the Epistles; an integration of the Wisdom Tradition and the Apocalypse. Fr. Gaspar was much nourished by the dry grains of wheat – and refreshed by the sour grapes of life then consecrated into the Precious Body and Blood of the Risen Lord in the Eucharist.

B. A Re-newed Mystical 'Theology'

St. Gaspar would notice not only Scripture and nature, but sacred art as well to express his ideal. He noted this early in his Spiritual Diary one late summer night:

*...This evening I saw a painting that depicted an image of the Trinity, that inspired much reverence and love in me for the three Persons. The eternal Father as standing with His arms opened which explained for me something of His Mercy and his ready communication of His gifts...*²⁰

St. Gaspar also saw his own vocation as that of drawing within himself a portrait of Jesus Christ:

*... We need to draw a portrait within ourselves of Jesus Christ...*²¹

Fr. Bertoni develops this in his beautiful **Original Constitution 223**:

For indeed nothing moves one toward that love of genuine charity for another than for us to take note of those singular ornaments of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit in him, and that we contemplate the other as an Image of God painted with the most excellent colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive to increase within themselves in those virtues and graces that they frequently reflect on in others, and that they come to consider these others are superior to ourselves [cf. Ph 2:3], and to rejoice in those spiritual goods of others, and

²⁰ cf. MP, Aug. 24, 1808.

²¹ cf. MP, Feb. 26, 1809

to thank God for them, then in a marvelous manner will mutual charity increase in them.

At the end of the last General Chapter held in Rome, the Capitulars were blessed at an Audience with Pope John Paul II. In thanking our small Congregation for its relatively high number of confreres chosen to be Bishops – the Holy Father quoted this **Original Constitution** - clearly based on CSJ 250 of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and the great Jesuit Theologian Francis Suarez²². Fr. Suarez noted other sources for this thought going back to the Rule of St. Augustine, and even to St. Paul, who wrote in captivity to the Philippians: **be united in your convictions, united in your love ... be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself...** [cf. Ph 2:2, ff.]. This serves as Paul's introduction of the central mystery of Christ's self-emptying. It is in His Divine Filiation that the Son loves the Father – and in Fr. Bertoni's ideal it is fraternal love and humility that the Stigmatine comes best to imitate Him. [CF ## 188; 208; 220].

The Irish Monk, Dom Columba Marmion, OSB, was beatified with Blessed Pope John 23rd. As one incardinated into the Arch-Diocese of Dublin, he was ordained in our own Stigmatine Church, St. Agatha of the Goths, in Rome, Italy. He once wrote:

... 'leave your offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to your brother...' [Mt 5:23, f.]. This is why the least willful coldness, the last resentment harbored in the soul towards our neighbors form a great obstacle to the perfection of that union which Our Lord wishes to have with us in the Eucharist...²³

Fr. Bertoni lamented that there are only very few who grasp what God would accomplish in them, if He was not impeded by them.²⁴ The German Protestant theologian Jurgen Moltmann noted that the original sin is not so much the titanic desire to be like God – but, rather the refusal to be what God likes!

The ultimate Model for St. Paul's ideal is Jesus Christ - **who emptied himself** [the Greek word is **kenosis**] to become one of us – so that as He became poor for our sake, we might become enriched by His poverty [cf. 2 Co 8:9]. Christ's great wealth is that He is the Incarnation of His Father's Mercy, as Pope John Paul II describes so beautifully in his encyclical of the First Sunday of Advent, 1980, ***Dives in Misericordia***.

²² F. Suarez, SJ, Tractatus Decimus. *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, Book 8, c. 8, n. 1, p. 955 a. [NB: The first Stigmatine Mission is one's own confreres – cf. CF # 262]

²³ Dom Columba Marmion, 'Christ, the Life of the Soul', 5 [CLS 2, 8, 5], in: *Spiritual Writings*. P. Lethielleux-Mardesus Abbey 1998, p. 236 [NB: St. Agatha of the Goths Church in Rome has been the Stigmatine General Curia in Rome since 1927 – from 1837-1927, it served as the Irish College and a Priest of Dublin – Dom Columba Marmion, was ordained there in June 1881, by the Rector, Bishop Kirby.

²⁴ cf. **MP**, May 18, 1811. cf. also Letter 19, Feb. 1813, *Epistolario* pp. 61, f.; Letter 80, ib., p. 166; Letter 154, March 28, 1829, p. 254.

The **Kenosis: self-emptying** of Jesus Christ is the **ICON** of the invisible God [cf. Col 1:15] – Jesus by giving Himself is the radiant light in our darkness of God's glory, and the perfect copy [*karakter*] of His nature [cf. Heb 1:3] – whoever sees Jesus sees also the eternal Trinity: **whoever sees Me, sees the One Who sent Me** [cf. Jn 12:44, ff] – **To have seen Me, is to have seen the Father** [cf. Jn 14:7-9]. The Sacred Stigmata of Jesus Christ, then, is the Window allowing us to look into the Trinity – and the Mirror before which we are called by vocation to stand to see if we are truly ready for the Nuptial Banquet of the Eucharist, and the Eternal Espousals with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A great modern theologian [Fr. von Balthasar] has taught that within the Trinity, the divine Persons are constituted by their **self-giving** – a 'Person' within the Trinity is One Who gives of Himself to the Others. Jesus' Stigmata is the culmination of His Self-giving earth - and enables Him to be the Immolated Lamb of the special marriage noted near the end of Sacred Scripture: there will be a New Heaven and a New Earth. Forever, **He will be our God and we will be His People** – a **nuptial formula**. He will wipe away all tears from our eyes - there will be no more death, no more mourning, no more separation, no more sadness! [cf. Rv 21:1, ff.] – the Church will be all dressed up as a Bride with the good deeds of the Saints for her Espousals with the Immolated Lamb! Fr. Bertoni uses phrases from the Song of Songs to describe [with St. Gregory] this mysterious attraction for the Eternal Espousals:

Med. 7: 5004: Prelude 3. *Draw me after You* [Ct 1:3] You draw, O Lord, Your **Spouse** by Your right hand, and *we will run after You to the odor of Your ointments: ibi, and the teachings of the Church in words and deeds and disciplines: in the odor of Your ointments" this is the fruit of Your grace. To the odor of Your ointments Ct 1:3. And if we cannot follow you with a strong love of a **Spouse** already adult in the school of holy love draw me ibi. We will follow you with the first-fruits of the most tender, nascent and youthful fervor.*

Med. 7: 5005: *We will run after you to the odor of your ointments Ct 1:3. Therefore, the young maidens have loved you v. 2.*

O Lord, you draw everything to the designs of Your Providence with the sweetness and effectiveness of Your grace, the precious fruit of Your House. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. [cf. Jn 12:32]. **Thus, You draw Your Spouse, which is the Church, our Mother, and Yours and her children, which we also are.**

Med. 7: 5006: **But, Your Spouse You draw as it were, by the hand, by Your right hand, and so she does not so much follow You, as accompany You: *draw me Ct 1:3. Thus, you divide as though with your maternal care the execution of your paternal Providence over us. We, as your tender young children, cannot run with You, as You go not with steps, but with leaps, and leaps of a giant: He has rejoiced as a giant to run the way [Ps 18:6], We too will run after You - We will run after You ibi, in the odor of Your graces: to the odor of Your ointments***

ibi, and of the teachings, and disciplines, and of the examples of our Mother, and these are also Your graces.²⁵

This is the divinely chosen Descent of God – so that we might go back through the Ascension, to be with Him forever in our resurrection. Theology speaks of **Christology from Above** – with the Descent of Christ among us at Christmas. The counter-part of this is the **Christology from below**: that the Lord ascends from His earthly sojourn for the eternal bliss of the Church with the Trinity. The Saints – as Fr. Bertoni does – teach us a **Christology from Within!**²⁶

The Saints came to understand the ***IN-spiration*** of God's Word, the ***IN-fusion*** of God's Grace, that the Risen Christ ***IN-forms*** the Eucharist and those who receive It – in differing ways, as we are ***IN-grafted*** into Christ at Baptism, we are ***IN-undated*** by His Holy Spirit at Confirmation, we are ***IN-corporated*** into Him by the reception of Holy Communion. In the sufferings of life, there develops a kind of nuptial pattern: our adoring and praying saintly Founder discerned that within, a new life, a new and fresh charism that came forward for the Church. Authentic spirituality involves **a sharing in Christ's Holy Abandonment to His Father** – and each of us is called to share in this as we accept the way life turns out. Our vocation is a persevering fidelity to Christ's Stigmata, the ultimate expression of His self-giving – that will be blessed eternally with an espousals forever with God. The saints provide a marvelous synthesis regarding the presence of the Suffering and Risen Christ within us all – for Fr. Bertoni, the acceptance of God's will is the ultimate living of the Stigmatine life – **configuration** to Christ means to share His experience. As Christ has risen, He is present in all of the segments of life: the past, this very day and the unknown tomorrow. This is kept before us in the Eucharist as Memorial, Presence and Promise. The saints more than anyone provide a tangible witness of Christ's life, death and resurrection.

C. The 'Integral' Stigmata and the Eternal Espousals

As Jesus died totally divested of His external glory, in deepest darkness and shame, can we in some way imagine Fr. Bertoni's hope as a Founder flickering as long as he lived, and never being extinguished? He truly was caught up in Jesus' own loving obedience, His abandonment to his Father. There is a growth for the Church in the understanding of God's word, the Council teaches us [DV 8] through contemplation, study, lived experience and fidelity to the teaching Church: this seems to be a synthesis of Fr. Bertoni's life. There is a deep divine fuller sense in God's

²⁵ These thoughts are from Meditation 7. Fr. Bertoni uses this same expression in his gradated 'Espousals Principle' - cf. his Panegyric on St. Francis of Assisi, perhaps the morning of the Feast October 4, 1808 [cf. MssB ## 1844-1874, especially # 1868].

²⁶ For these thoughts, cf. Mark A. MacIntosh, *Spirituality and the Incarnation in Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Notre Dame & London: University of Notre Dame Press 1966.

Word – for St. Gaspar, trusting in God: his style of Holy Abandonment to God’s Will was a translation of years of poor health, sadness at home, family struggles, some apostolic failures, and community difficulties – and then in death in itself. In coping with the challenges of his life, Fr. Bertoni was gradually forged into preparation for eternity.

Scripture refers to the nothingness before creation as an abyss of the darkness, the desert and the deep – and this abyss of human misery calls out to the abyss of Infinite Mercy ²⁷. Jesus bestows on those dearest to him an increasing share in His Sacred Stigmata – in all of this suffering, the Eucharist provides the Nuptial Banquet leading to the eternal life of union.

Corresponding to the life of Grace in the crucible of his own personal suffering and dedication to the changing needs of the Church, St. Gaspar developed in his self-abandonment to God and availability to the Church. He saw it as a gradual clarifying of the portrait of Christ Jesus within his own life. Through the Stigmata of his own life – so often *wounded, but not dead!* - he is brought beyond his own limitations to this in-depth experience of God’s Self-giving, and an experience of Christ’s Passion and Death. This was one of his avowed purposes in preaching – to lead his listeners to come to the **clefts** of the Stigmata:

430: *Show, therefore, to these souls who devoutly gaze upon you those cruel clefts of those nails made in you, first lacerating His hands, and then His feet. Show the very place where His head reclined upon you, expiring, as their loving Father, indeed their faithful Friend, their most tender Brother, their most lovable and most kind Spouse. Lastly, show that blood shed out of love for them, with which you still trickle and redden in long streams. In addition to the impression that you can bring about in them, let there be joined also the eloquence of this blood, as the Apostle describes [Heb 12:24]. Let there be attained, therefore, through you such a great commotion in the hearts of these listeners that I believe I will see this very day, even though I cannot achieve this with my words ²⁸.*

In his own mysticism of helplessness associated with the wounds of life, Fr. Bertoni’s hope never wavered in **the special grace** of the vocation - one that is not based on human resources, but ***is to be carried out with the grace of the Holy Spirit, for ‘He Who has begun a good work in you will bring it to perfection’*** [Ph 1:6] [cf. CF # 185].

The deep trials that St. Gaspar experienced with his health and mission were not an interruption in his life of prayer – but, rather a means that brought to an ever greater sharing in Christ’s death and resurrection. In all his times of darkness, St. Gaspar went on searching, seeking for the Lord in all things: ***seek God alone, for to***

²⁷ Fr. Bertoni often refers to this abyss in his Letters to Mother Naudet – cf. *Epistolario*: Letter 8, Dec. 1812, p. 40; Letter 48, June 1814 p. 115

²⁸ This is from St. Gaspar’s Good Friday sermon of 1801 – then repeated in 1806.

see God in all things, this is a making of oneself superior to all human happenings ²⁹ - ***reading today about the internal presence of God, i.e., that since God is within us, it is not necessary to go outside to look for Him*** ³⁰ - ***God alone is to be sought, and nothing else: not consolations or satisfactions*** ³¹. This is the marked contrast: ***...in the depths of one's own nothingness, God is found. Experiencing very sublime realities concerning God, there was a profound recognition of myself.*** ³²

In the mystical style of Fr. Gaspar, he often expresses himself in terms taken from his reflections on the Stigmata, and on God the Spouse of the soul, or, Christ the Spouse of the Church ³³:

4991: Regarding prayer, she feeds him having him meditate on the mysteries of His humanity; she feeds him making him meditate on His Passion; she brings him to the temple, making him meditate on the mysteries of the resurrection and the divinity, so that he can then preach with unction, etc. ³⁴

We should correspond also in action, progressing from virtue to virtue, [Ps 83:8], from the moral virtues to the religious, to the divine; and in prayer seeking to profit from the life of Christ, to His Passion and to His Resurrection. Accomplishing all this methodically, and not by fits and starts. All is based on the divine Scriptures, from which one derives precepts for action, and knowledge for prayer. All prayer, all scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.... [2 Tm 3:16, f.]

The mystical 'Night' assumes many forms – a kind of absence of the 'Omnipresent'; or silence of the Eternal Word; the 'darkness' of Christ's descent; the Psalmist's 'desert thirst' for the streams of Salvation [cf. Pss 22; 42; 63 – Is 12:1, ff.], for God; the biblical descriptions of Gethsemane or the Paschal Mystery in general. For St. Gaspar, his long and painful monotony of sacrifice led him ever more deeply into the mystery of the spirit of Holy Abandonment. The mystery of the Stigmata is not only loved – and learned about – but needs to be experienced in the School of God. In describing his healing process as *wounded, but not dead*, Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet:

²⁹ cf. MP, July 30, 1808

³⁰ cf. MP, Oct. 13, 1808

³¹ cf. MP, Dec. 23, 1808.

³² cf. MP, Aug. 24, 1808.

³³ Cf. Meditation 6

³⁴ Translator's Note: St. Gaspar notes here the need to meditate on the Resurrection, in order to preach with more unction. In Fr. Bertoni's retreat for young priests [September 13-22, 1801], Fr. Bertoni developed both aspects of the Stigmata: *Imagine that you see Him with the scars of his wounds... inviting you, too, to heaven... Christ has entered new life with the scars of His wounds...* [cf. MssB ## 2632; 2635-2647, passim.] [cf. also the website: www.st-bertoni.com, under "Life & Spirituality", *STIMATE INTEGRÉ*].

... I am getting better rather slowly! Please pray, Reverend Mother, out of your charity, that I may derive some fruit from the school in which He has deigned to teach me, so that I might be disposed to serve Him...³⁵

Years later, St. Gaspar saw his own long 'dark night' as the privileged time in which to learn in **the School of God**:

...The works of God have their own trials, with which God shows his own hand in directing them and leading them to His purposes. He does this with the difficulties which He allows, by taking our cooperation away, that we might give space to His Providence. From this the way can be seen clearly that all depends on His conservation and granting success. When, therefore, it is night for us, it is the day-time for Him. He is the One Who knows what is to be done. And we ought to raise our hands toward heaven, when we do not know how to apply them, and thus it is better that we ask the outcome of God. 'In the nights lift up your hands to the holly laces, and bless the Lord.' [cf. Ps 133:2]. This is the Latin that God teaches to anyone who is in His School. 'And the night shall be light as the day.' [Ps 138:12] And this is a further Latin principle that our good Father has explained to us from the very beginning, drawing the light out of the darkness, and that He would like, out of His goodness, to clarify subsequently, as the darkness returns. It is in this that He leaves our works, for the admirable splendor of His glory. 'Trust in the Lord', therefore, 'and do good!' [Ps 36:3].³⁶

As actions speak louder than words, the love of Fr. Bertoni's heart moved him to abandon his cares into the arms of God's loving mercy – and to commit every fiber of his strength to the service of the Church. The deepest wounds of love in Christ are the signs of His immolation endured on the Cross, the final one being inflicted even after his death – leading to an eternal espousals:

Med. 3: 4899: ...The fourth means: He governs her with the gifts of His grace and glory. *The charity of God is poured forth...* [Rm 5:5]. - *For we are saved by hope.* [Rm 8:24]. **Such gifts had been merited with the Passion, communicated in the Resurrection and Ascension**³⁷. *Ascending on high, He held captivity captive; He gave gifts to men.* [Ep 4:8]. **This is an internal government and realm.** *The kingdom of God is within you.* [Lk 17:21]. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.* [Rm 14:17]. "In the Holy Spirit": *For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* [Rm 8:14]. *He Who is the Head, even Christ: from Whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint*

³⁵ cf. Letter 45, June 1, 1814, in *Epistolario*, p. 109.

³⁶ cf. Letter 157, May 22, 1929, in *Epistolario*, pp. 256, f.

³⁷ Here St. Gregory maintains the integral aspects of the Paschal Mystery – as Fr. Bertoni often does – cf. in this [Web Site](#): *Stimulate Integre*.

supplies to the operation in the measure, makes increase the body, unto the edifying itself in charity. [Ep 4:15, f.].

Med. 3: 4957: This is how it can be understood concerning Anna and her Husband, Elcana as a type of Christ and His Church, that together they got up in the morning and went together to return to their own town: **Wherever the Church goes, Christ goes with her with His grace.**

They returned and came into their house at Ramatha. v. 19.

Ramatha is the heavenly homeland, as we have said. So how does the Church arrive there, which had just ceased in her preaching of the Jews, and has not ascended into the heavenly homeland? It is true that when the Lord arose from the dead, she spoke through the doctors who were sent in preaching, saying, [Mt 28:20]: *And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the earth.* Hence, **it is not absurd that holy Church would consider herself having risen and returned with Him**³⁸. He would never desert His chosen ones through a spiritual presence, and He remains with those still here, and withdraws from those who leave her.

Med. 5: 4984: *To offer the solemn sacrifice. ibi.*

Then it happened that when he manifested Himself in heaven to His Father through the matter of **His glorified flesh**³⁹, and the nature of the Angels, as well as our redemption, so also He rejoiced in their reparation.

To fulfill his vow. v. 21.

In the head of the book it is written of me: that I should do your will...then I said: I have desired it... [Ps 39:6, ff.]⁴⁰.

To offer: ibi. Then, he made the offering when He made it possible for us to take our place in the heavenly realms.

Nuptial Love is sublimely receptive and totally geared toward the other, in a kind of mutual indwelling: ***Make your home in Me as I make mine in you... whoever remains in Me, with Me in him, bears fruit in plenty...*** [Jn 15:3, ff].

³⁸ St. Gregory the Great has a strong sense of the Church having already risen with Christ – the integral dimensions of the Paschal Mystery. [cf. this Web Site, under Studies: Stimate Integre].

³⁹ Translator's Note: the recurring interest in the Risen Lord.

⁴⁰ Translators' Note: Biblical abandonment? Ps 39 {40} is the 'Disciples' Prayer.' [cf. Heb. 10:5-7]

Conclusion

It was in the new spring-time of 1841 - 25 long years later, following the founding of the Congregation in 1816, after a daily experience of life together – that Fr. Bertoni set about codifying his own lived experience in the establishment of a new religious community. On May 11, 1841, he wrote to his friend, Fr. Bragato, Royal Court Chaplain in Vienna, asking for his prayers. This is a paragraph of his letter:

...Pray much also for all of us, and for that which I am now writing drop by drop, if the Lord wills that this should redound to His glory. We are doing our part, according to the grace that God grants, and He will certainly hold up His end of the bargain – nor, do I really wish to know now what it is that He would like to accomplish. I am at peace, firmly believing that God can accomplish all that He wants, and always does what is better, even though this is so often quite distant from our limited views – and even sometimes contrary to them. ‘I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be always in my mouth.’ [Ps 33:2]. And help me so that I might praise and serve Him ‘day and night’ [Rv 4:8; 7:15], dwelling forever in His house for all eternity, ‘for the figure of this world is passing away.’ [1Co 7:31].⁴¹

By this time, Fr. Bertoni was a complete invalid, never leaving the house. And the Constitutions he was working on from his bed were never finished, when death came to him over 12 years later. Nonetheless, the 12 Parts, and 314 paragraphs that he composed, and which we know as the **Original Constitutions**, come to an end with a direct quotation from the Constitutions of St. Ignatius of Loyola, in which Fr. Bertoni is speaking about Novices: this would seem to be a clear indication that Fr. Bertoni’s whole life, codified to some extent in his **Original Constitutions**, might be summarized as a

Contemplation unto Hope!

The terrible wounds of time will be exchanged for the Glorious Espousals of Eternity. This is his message today, our Stigmatine ‘Memorial Day’, here at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Milford!

Final Prayer⁴²

5041: COLLOQUY. Lord, bring it about that by corresponding to Your grace and guidance of the Church, we, too, might learn the proposals of great and strong virtues, in order to help others by preaching, and ourselves by praying.

⁴¹ cf. Letter 9 to Fr. Bragato, in: *Epistolario* p. 325].

⁴² Conclusion to Meditation 7 of St. Gregory’s Commentary on 1 Samuel.

And may we gain the desires of the knowledge of God to preach well and to pray well. And may we always have the most pure intention of charity, and be totally bereft of every ambition of this world; and let us seek the virtues and the knowledge in Your Catholic Church. Grant that we might come to the prompt and devout execution of Your projects, and in the exercise of the virtues, and in our being indoctrinated in the divine Scriptures; and that we thus give ourselves without reserve to you ⁴³, and that through Your grace we might increase in virtue and knowledge ⁴⁴.

O Lord, this morning we have gleaned this flour from the seed of the divine words by meditating, and almost by threshing. We offer this flour to You, so that You might grant us bread, and our daily bread, so that we might live to carry out Your Will ⁴⁵.

†
†††
†

⁴³ A program espoused and lived by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II: *Totus Tuus!*

⁴⁴ This ideal is presented by Fr. Bertoni in his Part IV, *Original Constitutions: De Progressu Suiipsius* [CF ## 47-48] – *De Progressu in Ecclesiasticis Doctrinis* [CF ## 48-50]

⁴⁵ This is Fr. Bertoni's central ideal: *in obsequium*: Abandonment to God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit - Availability to the Church, through any Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever [CF # 163] - this is the Apostolic Mission, conferred by Jesus Christ Himself, as a share in His Personal Mission from the Father, in showing His Sorrowful Stigmata **retained in His Glorious Body** [cf. Jn 20] – **and as exemplified by the Patrons of the Stigmatines, the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph.**

Paluch 6

The Pierced One



The
Sacred Stigmata

In the Writings of

St. Gaspar Bertoni



April 30, 2008

Joseph Henchey, CSS

... Here we have an anchor for our soul ... Reaching right through, beyond the veil ... beyond the Second Veil, called the Holy of Holies ... a living opening through the Curtain, that is, His Body ...[cf. Heb 6:19; 9:3; 10:20]



1312: ...If you wish to see me, look for me in the wound of the side of Christ. For it is there that I dwell; and here it will be easy to find me. You will search in vain in any other place.

[St. Gaspar Bertoni, For 'Low' Sunday, April 5th of the year 1807, Verona, in St. Paul's of Campo Marzio].

1771: *His side, opened after His death, is used to show us that Heart, that same Heart wounded by the lance, that WOUND RETAINED IN HIS GLORIOUS BODY*, render the Heart so sweet, evident, divine, so much so that it is impossible to venerate *the Wounded Heart without remembering and venerating His immense love* [St. Gaspar Bertoni, Sermon on Sacred Heart]



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BALANCED DEVOTIONS, *INTEGRAL* DOCTRINE

Presentation

[1] It has been said that years of study without prayer could make a person proud – and the converse: prayer without study, might make a person ‘funny.’¹ St. Gaspar Bertoni’s insistence on a **balance** between his ideal of intense spirituality and true and fervent devotion¹ – is what enables his ideal of the Apostolic Mission as *Contemplata tradere* [CF # 49] - he hoped for more than ordinary knowledge.

[a] **CF # 59.** A special and careful program is to be set up for those who are dedicated to studies, both so that their **health** may experience no harm, and also so that their **necessary comfort** might not be lacking. As a result, the Superior should be vigilant so that they might have decent food and clothing, as well as the necessary recreation. He is to see to it that the students might be **free from all concern and solicitude** about these matters, so that they might the **more easily bear the burden of their studies, and be content in religious moderation.**

[b] **CF # 62.** It will be incumbent upon the Superior to see to it that the Scholastics do not study in those times harmful to their **physical health**. They will be provided with that amount of time that will be necessary for their **sleep**, so that they might be able to maintain a certain balance in their mental endeavors **so that they might persevere longer in acquiring and exercising the necessary learning for the service of the Church.**

[c] **CF # 65.** All the members will protect their upright way of life and the proper intention for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. **For no one, without a pure mind and the imitation of the Saints, will ever grasp the words of the Saints**, says St. Athanasias [*De Incarn.* near the end]. All should **pray often to God**, Who is the Lord of all knowledge [1 S 2:3] that He might grant to them the necessary knowledge.

[d] **CF # 66.** It will be up to the Superiors to see to it that neither the **love for piety** will be cooled through the **fervor of studies**, nor that through any excess of piety, will the necessary studies be impeded.

[e] **CF # 126.** In their studies, they will also observe the prescribed schedule, so that they will not study, or read, or write, or meditate, before, nor after the time established. They will also keep to the place and the manner and the other circumstances required **in studying, in accord with the norm of obedience.**

[f] **CF # 127.** They will also keep that order **so that they do not prefer knowledge over the spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation, spiritual reading and the required examinations of conscience, and other similar exercises.** Neither should they place studies ahead of **religious discipline** or the orders of Superiors. They should always be prepared to interrupt them immediately, even totally, at the hint of the Superiors, they should be willing to give up studies altogether already undertaken, according to that line in the Psalm: ‘**Teach me wisdom and knowledge.**’ [cf. Ps 118:66].

[g] **CF # 166.** Wherever it is possible, it is fitting that our men also assist in the education of the youth. In this ministry, there is to be observed that principle taken from the Shorter Rules of St. Basil: ‘Since the Apostle has said: **And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but rear them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord [Ep 6:4]** - then, any of our men who teach the young, may they lead them with this mentality. May those who do instruct the youth **be fully confident that they indeed can form these students, educating them in the discipline and the correction of the Lord.** May our men observe the Lord’s own precept: **Let the little children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven [Mt 19:14].** If any such ideal and hope are not present, then I think that this endeavor would not be pleasing to God, nor would it be proper, or advantageous for us.

[h] **CF # 173.** The beginning of school, and the individual classes should be **introduced by a public prayer.** The young people are to be taught that this brief prayer has **two purposes:** one is that **they offer up to God all their school work,** and in particular their time and activity. The second goal is that the students **accustom themselves to beg from God the grace to profit by these studies.** This practice can prove to be very useful for the other activities of life.

[i] **CF # 180.** It is very useful to propose and to bestow **rewards** or honors to the extern students for the sake of **encouraging fervor in their studies.** In all these matters, propriety and a religious sense are to be observed.

[2] Within the Church herself there has been a well-chartered quest for the **proper balance between academic freedom and the individual believer’s right to know the teaching of Jesus Christ** – the challenge between leaping forward with support entrenched in the Tradition – an integration between renewal and Fidelity: in the official Magisterium was much influenced by Pope Paul VI’s title of his *Motu Proprio* of December 7, 1965: **INTEGRAE SERVANDAE,** in which the name and the regulations of the old ‘Holy Office’ were changed. The basic operating principle is noted in the opening paragraph of this document: the Roman Pontiffs, in union with the Episcopal body, have guarded over the course of the centuries and in the midst of human vicissitudes the Deposit of the Revealed Religion, entrusted to them by God, in order that it be conserved **integrally** and so it is that they have transmitted this **intact** even up through our present time ... ¹ The tendency has been to make use of the word **integral** in matters of faith and morals in harmony with the Word of God understood over the centuries in the tradition of the Church. The effort has also been to show the positive intervention of the Church in the matter of teaching the truth – there are clearly heretical teachings; but the condemnation of one as a ‘heretic’ has been avoided.

[a] The Church reiterates this in her Declaration of Feb. 15, 1975¹: The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in fulfilling its proper task of **promoting and protecting the Doctrine of the Faith, and the customs of the entire Church** – needs to exercise vigilance.¹

[b] The Congregation issued another Declaration in the same regard on December 15, 1979¹ in which the following is made clear: The Church of Christ has received from God the mandate of guarding and protecting the Deposit of the faith, so that all the faithful under the guidance of her Sacred Magisterium, through which the Person of Christ the Teacher par excellence, acts in the Church so that all might adhere indefectibly to the faith transmitted to the believers once and for all that all might penetrate more deeply into this and more fully may apply it to life ... the specific scope of the Magisterium is to conserve, penetrate ever more profoundly, to expose, teach, defend the Sacred Deposit of Revelation; that is, to illumine the life of the Church and humanity through divine truth.

[c] A few months later¹, Pope John Paul II wrote an extended letter to the German Hierarchy, removing the 'mandate to teach Catholic Theology'. Among the statements noted here, the Holy father addressed this rhetorical question: Regarding the assignment of teaching of Professor Kung, these following questions need to be posed: a theologian, **who does not accept integrally the Doctrine of the Church**, does he still have the right of teaching in the Name of the Church and on the basis of the special mission received by her?

[d] The Congregation then sent a letter to the Dominican theologian, Fr. E. Schillebeeckx, on November 20, 1980¹ making known to him that several theological points in his published works remained ambiguous on some fundamental points of the Catholic faith – inviting him to an open colloquy as serious doubts remained regarding his teaching.

[e] Another letter to Fr. Schillebeeckx was forthcoming from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on June 13, 1984¹ – this time on the author ideas concerning the Priesthood. In this letter the Congregation declared that the time of discussion had passed, and that of decision had arrived – and that he was obliged to accept the teachings of the Church also in this matter.

[f] The definitive letter of the Congregation to Fr. Schillebeeckx bears the date of September 15, 1986¹ in which it is declared that the author's opinions on certain matters regarding the Sacrament of Holy Order and priestly ministry in the Church. The Congregation cites DV 12, § 3 in which it is declared that scholars need to ponder the exact sense of the sacred texts, and hold to the content and to the unity of all of sacred Scripture – and need to keep in mind the living tradition of the whole Church and the analogy of faith. The teaching contained in a number of the Dutch theologian's works remain in disaccord with the teaching of the Church.

[f] The end result of these and other discussions led to the publication by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the faith, an ***Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian***, May 24, 1990¹, Feast of the Ascension. In the course of this document, it is taught: ... ***By virtue of the divine mandate given to it in the Church, the Magisterium has the mission to set forth the Gospel's teaching, guard its integrity, and hereby protect the faith of the People of God... This***

judgment does not concern the person of the theologian, but the intellectual positions publicly espoused. [n. 37].

[3] The recent Magisterium has also taught repeatedly the **integrality** of the Paschal Mystery:

‘1. From her very beginning the Church has professed faith in the Lord, **crucified and risen**, and has gathered the fundamental contents of her belief into certain formulas. The central event of the **death and resurrection** of the lord Jesus, expressed first in simple formulas, and subsequently in formulas that were more developed¹, made it possible to give life to that uninterrupted proclamation of faith, in which the Church has handed on both what had been received from the lips of Christ and from His works, as well as what had been learned **at the prompting of the Holy Spirit**’ [DV 7].

‘The same NT is the singular witness of the first profession proclaimed by the disciples immediately after the events of Easter: ***For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Jesus died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve.***’ [1 Co 15:3-5].¹

This is the **integral Paschal Mystery**, worshipped in St. Gaspar Bertoni’s Genuine Devotion to the Stigmata: **believed, celebrated and lived.**



St. Gaspar Bertoni

1297:

A PARISH SERMON 38
The Spiritual Life
The Resurrection

For 'Low' Sunday, April 5th [98], of the year 1807, Verona, in St. Paul's of Campo Marzio.

[Introduction]

With what desire, most illustrious listeners, and my most gentle brothers and sisters, with what desire always comes over me when I ascend here in this place to speak. And with what pleasure there is for me to speak to you, God knows. Moreover, today I cannot hide my joy, I do not know how to contain my rejoicing.

Having just completed in these past days, the laments of penance, and your justification being completed, celebrated in these days, as I believe, **today, for all of you, is Easter. I see you, then, risen in Christ, walking joyfully in newness of life, solicitous to hurry on with the disciples to see Christ in Galilee.**

1298: I am speaking, then, with men and women who from fear and contrition, **ascend with sureness to the confidence of divine mercy.** You have ascended from the joys of this world and from its consolations, through compunction and sadness that is from God. You have now passed over into a holy devout exaltation, into a vibrant spiritual joy in the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is not so much that past sins remembered give pain, as the memory delights and influences the desire for eternal rewards. You are indeed happy, and I call myself blessed today in that I share in your joy.

1299: However, my tongue is not free except to serve the most bold dispositions of your and my heart. You are running along quite well: I have to feel joy, and I must congratulate you. I cannot hold back from exhorting you to move your bodies along toward heaven, even to touch the blessed goal toward which you tend, without ever going back to retrace one's steps. I exhort you not even to give a glance at this unhappy earth, from which, as a sorrowful bitter place, you have by now much distanced yourselves.

[1. **Seek what is above!**]:

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

Here are two very strong reasons for this: I will only try to explain them to you. I promise you on such a day of much joy that my sermon will have much consolation, and as is my custom, it will be brief.

[a. Be dead to sin!]:

1301: First of all, *you are dead*. There are various kinds of death. Bodily death: according to this, Abraham, being dead, yet was not dead, since God [the Gospel speaks, Mt 22:32] is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Then, there is the death of the soul. Christ alluded to this in His saying: *...let the dead bury their dead...* [Mt 8:22]. Another, very praise-worthy death is that which comes from virtue, of which the Doctor of the Gentiles writes in this same place: *...Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth...* [Col. 3:5]. There is still another death, the cause of the antecedent one. This is achieved in Baptism, or in Penance, which is a laborious Baptism. It is of this that St. Paul wishes to have you understand how it is that you are *dead*.

1302: He explains this quite well himself in the Letter to the Romans: *...For we that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?* [Rm 6:2]. This is about the subject of this death. And what does it mean to be *dead to sin*? It means not to make any more use of sin. Baptism has accomplished this once, and Penance has renewed it: it has put us to death to sin. It is necessary now to carry this death out with our solicitude, that whatever sin should command us, or evil passion, perverse affection, we are not to be obedient, but to be totally deaf to it all. We will thus be as dead, and let us persevere immobile.

[b. No wrong to others]:

1303: A person who is deceased, is said to be holy, a Saint ¹, never speaks badly of another. The dead do no injury, violence, offer no calumny, oppress no one. They show no envy toward the good, and do not insult the evil. Luxury does not pamper their flesh, nor do they burn with hatred. They do not adulate the powerful and the rich of this world, nor are they attracted by a restless curiosity. They do not seek the applause of the crowds that surround them. They do not chase after gold or silver, or rich, and pompous trappings. They do not cultivate honors, and do not respond to injuries. Pride does not swell them up, ambition does not vex them, and vain glory does not agitate them. The false wealth of this life does not elevate them, the insane fury of wrath does not perturb them. The frail beauty of a face does not fascinate them. This is what it means to be dead, dead to sin: not to be spent on earthy attractions, animal-like affections, the desires of this world and of the flesh.

[c. Dead through Baptism, Penance]:

1304: The Apostle continues: *...Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death...?* [cf. Rm 6:3]. [You add to this: or washed in the blood of Christ, or Penance]. This is the manner of such a death: Baptism and Penance are our Cross. This is also our sepulcher. We are, in fact, the Apostle

continues: ***...for we are buried together with Him by Baptism unto death...*** [v. 4]. This is so that each one of us would die as he has died, although not in the same way, he has died in the flesh and was buried; we are meant to be both of these in regard to sin. Both of these are 'death', but not of the same subject. The death of the flesh, that is Christ's death to sin, is ours: and both the former, as well as the latter, are true *death*. However, even though this is true, it is fitting that we should still contribute all that activity that is expected on our part. Thus, the Apostle adds: ***... that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life...*** [v. 4].

[d. Resurrection through Conversion]:

1305: Having thus proposed the future resurrection, St. Paul requires another resurrection of us, a new institution in the present life, for the changing of our ways. When, in fact, a fornicator becomes chaste, or an avaricious person becomes merciful, or a wrathful individual becomes meek, there takes place in these instances a *resurrection* which is the principle of the future, And how is this a resurrection? Because one dies to sin, and resurrects to justice. The former way of life is cancelled, and the new and angelic way almost flourishes anew. Thus, we can say with St. ANSELM¹: intemperance has died in such a person, and sobriety has risen up; in that young man impurity has died, and purity has risen. In that woman, uncleanness has died, and modesty has arisen. On hearing *new life*, let each one seek out in himself much diversity, and great changes.

[e. Going back to flesh-pots of Egypt]:

1306: However, the thought of how much virtue the Apostle might ask of us makes one weep, especially in seeing how much weakness there is in us. After Baptism, we have gone back and aged in the old vices, and after the Manna from heaven, we have again sought out the vile food of Egypt. Even, we have been rejuvenated so many times and liberated from slavery, and we have fallen right back into that sad old age of sin, and once more put our hands freely within chains. Now, however, in this Easter we have once more risen to grace and died to sin. Do we not now wish no longer to abuse such mercy, and to persevere with every effort?

1307: Would that past sins, I repeat this, and never could sufficiently: would that all past sins were buried, as this is the gift of grace. Would that after penance, we would keep ourselves as dead. This is the challenge for our commitment, although we see that even in this, grace must help us very much. Penance does not only cancel previous sins, but also confirms one against future lapses. As we have employed in the sacrament what is our part, namely contrition, the accusation and the will to make satisfaction - so, we also for the future, commit the care of our dedication not to become contaminated anew.

[f. Through Burial of our Sins, we rise with Him]:

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

1309: All this while our lives are hidden with Christ in God [Col 3:3]. As this fruit of blessedness is to be produced, it is necessary to let it come to maturity. We could still say much about this plant of death, but already without even being aware of it, we have touched upon the more joyful motive of the fruit of life. This, too, contains some difficulties at first sight to understand it, so cutting this out of love for brevity, with just the idea dropped, let us move on in haste to the **second thought**.

[2. New Life: Life of Grace]

1310: And let us see right away how there might be explained this hidden aspect of our life with Christ in God. Our brand new life is the life of grace that we possess. It is the life of glory that we await. Both of these are hidden from the eyes of the world. The world has no knowledge of this new kind of life, that is interior, spiritual and holy. In fact, the world thinks of it with abhorrence, and esteems it as melancholic and death. Furthermore, such a life proceeds covered under the humble veil of mortification, of apparent sadness and of corporal tribulations. And grace, the virtues, and the gifts, that are like the soul of this life, remain intimate in the spirit, and enclosed in the mind.

1311: And the good, points out the Holy Father, AUGUSTINE ¹, the good remain hidden because their good is concealed. What they love is neither visible, nor corporal. And thus, their merits are held back in secret, as are their rewards.

St. GREGORY THE GREAT also explains to you how these virtuous individuals are hidden in God. Thus, he writes in the Gift Book of his *Moralia* ¹: Anyone who loves to mortify himself, rejoices much in the repose afforded in contemplation. Such a person is dead to this world, and is shielded from all the perturbations of human realities in the bosom of the interior life where he remains in obscurity.

1312: To cite still another example, CORNELIUS a LAPIDE ¹ relates the story of the Holy Count, Eleazar, immobile in his mountainous solitude, lived there a celibate life with his virgin wife, Delphina. She sent him letters to find out how he was getting along. He responded: I am healthy of body and safe. **If you wish to see me, look for me in the wound of the side of Christ. For it is there that I dwell; and here it will be easy to find me. You will search in vain in any other place.**

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

[3. Life of Glory is unseen]:

1313: But, precisely this life of glory, in the hope of which we now glory, is much less known and seen by the world. Similarly, there is not seen the glorious life to which Christ has risen, and of which He lives in God, that is, near His Father. This is why St. Paul states [Col 3:3, ff.] that our life is hidden with Christ in God: ...*When Christ shall appear, who is your life* [i.e., the cause of your life] , *then you shall also appear with Him in glory...* [v. 4]. This is just like the pearl, says St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM¹, whose end is hidden as it is in its shell.

[a. Spiritual Winter gives way to a New Spring-time]:

1314: Even more fitting is the example that St. AUGUSTINE¹ uses to clarify this passage, that later St. ANSELM [100] would copy. In the bitter **winter** even the green tree seems dry to the sight. As the summer approaches, the living root once again is vested with fruit. This is our life, that is much like that **winter**, when the sun is further away from us and concealed behind the clouds. This sun for us is Christ.

[b. New Life in Christ]:

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

1316: And in another place: ...***But our conversation is in heaven...*** [Ph 3:20]. And: ...***But you are not in the flesh..*** [Rm 8:9]. And again: ... ***having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ*** ... [Ph 1:23]. These are some of the sublime affections of a person dead to sin, one who no longer has a taste for the tings of this earth. These **are the sublime feelings of a spirit living hidden together with Christ in God**. Such a person seeks only the **superior realities, those that are of heaven, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God** [Col 3:1]. These are the sweet transports of a heart ravished by the sweet joy of these holy thoughts.

[4. Reasons for Joy: Risen with Christ]:

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

1318: Heavenward, then, my beloved brothers and sisters, to heaven your thoughts, to heaven direct your affections. Elevate your hearts to heaven, where your treasure is, where your glory is, where your life is. The riches of this earth will flatter you, its honors will enchant you, all of which this earth offers you. But, this is not your life. When our life will indeed appear, we will then seek the delights, the leisure, the repose. And then we will find the riches, but without thorns; the pleasures, but without sadness; the honors, but without jealousies. We will be inebriated by the divine delights [Ps 35:9]. And we will be seated in the beauty, in the tranquil order of peace [Is 32:18]. And in the very bosom of God we will have rest from our fatigue, without any necessity to disturb us, without adversities that wear us down, without any disorder that would disturb us.

1319: In the meanwhile, as long as our life remains hidden, let us be content with keeping ourselves, and even being considered to be dead: *...we have been crucified to the world, and the world is a crucifix for us...* [Ga 6:14]... thus, we will mortify ourselves as the apostle goes on to say: *...mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth...* [Col 3:5]. He mans: you are already dead; persevere in this death by mortification.

1320: Mortify in you the members of the old man, the sinner in Adam [Col 3:5, ff.] - these members are the passions, that even after Penance, they come to life again with their acts which are, as he explains immediately, fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is the service of idols [v. 6]. For all these, there comes, or has come, the wrath of God upon the children of incredulity, revels to the sight of God and to the Gospel: *...in which you also walked some time, when you lived in them...* [v. 7].

1321: *...What fruit, therefore, had you,. Then, in those things of which you are now ashamed...* [Rm 6:21]. Would you like, then, to return to your vomit? Exhume your sin, put yourself back into slavery, throw away the most copious redemption of Jesus Christ? Would you annul the price of so much Blood, call down this Blood upon yourselves, with all the intolerable weight of His wrath? Would you exchange the supreme future goods that have been promised to you, for the abysmal evils from which God has dug you out? Would you choose rather the glory of your state, an eternal shame; the rights for an inheritance, for a sentence of condemnation? Would

you swap divine filiation and its honor for infamy, for a brute-like life? Would you prefer the flesh to the spirit, the earth to heaven, paradise for hell?

[Conclusion: Onward to heaven!]:

1322: No, of course not! To heaven, to eternal life, to heaven, you have been called. You are already well along your way, and moving along with giant steps. Follow through to the goal, to your heavenly home. You have been enrolled by God for an eternity to be the citizens of heaven, domestics, heirs of God. Upward, then, with all vigor, with all your strength, hurry onward, hasten your steps. The saints await you, already sure as they are of their happiness and solicitous also for yours. Christ awaits you, and has already prepared a place for you - rather, a throne. Why do you hesitate, why look anymore to earth, to heaven, to heaven! **If you have risen with Christ...**

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SOURCES

<u>OT</u>			
Ps 35:9	# 1318	Is 32:18	# 1318
<u>NT</u>			
Mt 8:32	# 1301	Ph 1:23	# 1316
22:32	# 1301	3:20	# 1316
Rm 6:2	# 1302	Col 3:1, ff.	# 1317
3	# 1304	1	## 1300;1316
4	# 1304	2	# 1300
5	# 1308	3	## 1301;1309;1313
21	# 1321	4	# 1313
8:9	# 1316	5	## 1301;1319;1320
Ga 2:20	# 1315	6	# 1320
6:14	# 1319	7	# 1320

FATHERS

St. AUGUSTINE, <i>Ennarr. In Ps 53:3</i> . [t.4, p. 493 G]	# 1311
<i>De Script. Vet. et Nov. Test.</i> Serm 36, 4 [t. 5/1, pp. 176/G ff.]	## 1314;1315
St. GREGORY the GREAT, <i>Moralia</i> , Bk 5, 5 [t. 1, p. 97/ 1 B]	# 1311

DOCTORS

St. ANSELM [Col 3:3 - cited by Cornelius a Lapide]	# 1305
[Uses Augustine's idea of the <u>cold winter</u> in the spiritual life]	# 1314

OTHER AUTHORS

CORNELIUS a LAPIDE, <i>In Col 3:3</i> .	##1303;1305;1312
RODRIGUEZ, <i>Christian Perfection</i> . [t. 2, tr. 1, 23, 2]	# 1303

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SERMON 5
The Ascension

Preached in the Parish Church of St. Paul's in the Campo Marzio section of Verona, on the 14th day of May in the year 1801.

[Introduction: Preparing a Place for us!]

At the harmonious sound of the angelic trumpets [Ps 46:6], at the joyful jubilation, Jesus in triumph ascends toward His Kingdom. I am quite sure, devout listeners, that you, too, **direct your yearning on this day toward heaven**. There you have affixed your hearts where indeed is guaranteed happiness ¹, where there is perfect beatitude and where peace is eternal. You are indeed exultant, animated by these noble promises with which Jesus consoled you before His departure, when He said: *...I go to prepare a place for you...* [Jn 14:2]. Indeed, your affections have been inspired and placed on such a sublime level.

500: But look, it would not be terribly offensive to your inspired charity to direct a compassionate regard toward so many of your brothers and sisters. They, too, are participants with you in the same promises, and yet, they are discouraged with their eyes lowered. The reason is that they are afraid of being forced to give up those wretched delights that they still badly enjoy. They make no effort, therefore, or they lack the confidence to lift up their eyes boldly toward heaven to where they have also been called.

501: PROPOSITION

As for me, I have to confess, the pain that I feel at their loss does not allow me to do anything other than to direct my words up this day for their salvation. In order to shake them up, I will make clear to them just how stupid it is for anyone to deliberately enjoy the present goods at the cost of an irreparable future good. You should not refuse to extend your helping hands in the form of your most fervent prayers. If you do, then I have absolutely no doubt that we will succeed in lifting them up out of their most sorry abjection.

[1. **The Choice: Time - or, Eternity?**]:

502: 1. The first point is that one should come to elect quality goods in contrast with those that are excessively inferior; in other words, the choice is between short-lived goods as against those that are eternal.

Let us imagine, then, my brother or sister in sin, that you could accept as directed to you all my words this day. Let us just imagine for a little while that it were possible for us to choose one of these two realities: either to enjoy for a single night a pleasant dream, and then on awaking the next day, to be confronted with a series of misfortunes that should have to last the rest of your life; or, to go without that very brief and only apparent sweetness, and even be willing to suffer a somewhat sad

dream, but with the assurance, however, that there would be placed in our hands until death all the goods that this earth could offer ¹.

503: Should there be anyone, desirous of that vain happiness of a short dream, who would be content to lose an entire life-time of joy, then I do not know what judgment to make. It would be hard to say whether such a one making such an extravagant choice would merit the more to be pitied as imprudent - or rather derided as ridiculous. What else is this present life than a fleeting dream, a waft of smoke, a shadow, a vapor, that dissipates when confronted with eternity? The choice now is up to you: either to enjoy in this short dream some delight forced out of creatures, as it were - or, to enjoy a blessed life that would know no end.

504: That such a choice is given to you, you have from the very words of Christ: ***...the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy...*** [Jn 16:20]. And do you resolve to rejoice now with the world and thus lose eternal joy? And are you not ashamed of yourself to entertain such a sorry deliberation? What opinion can the truly wise form regarding your judgment? Is not this already some indication of that rectitude of understanding with which each and every one of you, to your great honor have been endowed by God?

505: But, I do not want to find any further fault with you in this since I notice that you already are beginning to be a little ashamed of yourself; I can see that such an unfortunate deliberation has proceeded in you rather from not fully understanding the reality as it is in itself, rather than from any malice in your mind. This is also confirmed because I notice in other matters regarding which you surely have full knowledge, as regarding affairs that have to do with the necessities of this temporal life, you make use of prudent and praiseworthy counsel. Hence, let us understand well the quality of temporal goods and heavenly goods, and then all the more clearly will you perceive the ill-judged choice of such a determination. It is not just that you elect a delight that is at best fleeting, but even more you opt for a good that is only apparent over one that is authentic.

[a. Authenticity over Arrogance?]:

506: Apparent goods, over those that are authentic: Indeed, what are these benefits that are enjoyed in the brief dream that this life is, if not just that, goods that are merely dreamed? The avaricious person dreams of having his hands full of gold and silver - but, then with the new day, he gets up thinking that he is still clutching that wealth in his hands, but rather finds his hands empty. Thus is the way it is with the goods of this world, says the Holy Spirit - Who, however, speaking of those persons who abound in this, thus expresses Himself?

They have slept their sleep; and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands... [Ps 75:6]. And just as the illusion of a dream that does not render the state of anyone more comfortable than that of the poor person. He has dreamt that he had become rich, but this only increased his wretchedness realizing to his greater inner sorrow that he was indeed bereft of the wealth that with such pleasure

he imagined that he possessed. Much like this, the goods of this present time will never satisfy our hearts. This is an evident sign that such appurtenances are not all that they seem to be.

507: Just listen for a minute: what else does that emptiness mean that you experience after having satisfied your passions; after you have not denied your senses some pleasure that is really forbidden to you? What is that inner yearning, always desirous of other trappings, of ever new delights, over and above those that you achieve only after much effort? What is that regret that still weighs on your heart, and what is this restlessness that only increases, as your desires intensify even the more? Is it not that you are something like a feverish person who wrongly thinks that with just a little water he might be able to extinguish the burning fever, and yet seems to increase it even further?

[b. Inadequacy, or Perfection?]:

508: These are inadequate benefits, in comparison to the last end, which is perfect beatitude: But, I would like to point out that these goods seem to be genuine. However, they are not adequate for the deepest yearnings of our hearts: and this is why they can never be fully satisfying. Whatever delight and joy that might quiet our spirit put in motion by desires spring from the application of the faculties to objects pleasing to them. However, the object of any being, practically infinite in its desires, can only be an infinite good. How, then, can we want such insignificant rewards, that are so limited, for our satisfaction? If indeed our heart is as vast as another ocean, how could these little streamlets of water ever fill the immensity of its capacity?

509: O, but in heaven, only in heaven will we ever find an object suitable to our heart: a God, an infinite good. O, my God, only then, then only will I be satiated, when Your glory will appear [Ps 16:15]. ***Only You can slake my deepest yearnings with the torrent of Your delights*** [Ps 35:9]. This is why You have created me with an insatiable heart, that it might come to understand that it has been made for You, and that it will always be restless until it rests in You ¹. Human heart, understand your folly! Just to enjoy a passing dream, you would lose eternal beatitude. You chase after the shadows, vanity, and you leave the genuine good, Uncreated Beauty, you lose that God Who is everything.

[2. Counterfeit Gain - or, Real Loss?]:

510: 2. In the last analysis, it is only a matter of depriving yourself of just a few counterfeit goods, and delights that are really base.

These arguments that I have advanced up to now prove of themselves that whenever it is a question of renouncing each and every one of the goods and the pleasures of this life in order to be assured of eternal blessings, it would be supreme folly to prefer the present over the future. However, it is not necessary to go this far. God did not forbid Adam from enjoying all the fruits of the earthly paradise: He forbade only one tree. And the condition with which Adam could have assured for

himself and for all his descendants his felicity was so easy to comply with, that his bad judgment is all the more deplorable when he lost so much for such a small gain.

511: This is our own situation now. Are those delights truly honest ones, and are those pleasures truly innocent that you enjoy so much? If so, then continue to enjoy them. However if due to bad intentions of your mind, or if there is an unregulated manner in which you make use of them, or if you love them - you yourself make illicit what, in other circumstances, could become licit. Nothing other is being asked of you than that you reform your heart and that you regulate the use of these realities. Hence, it is apparent that you can indeed enjoy these benefits or delights in this life provided they are correct in themselves, or that they can be rendered good by your manner of making use of them. In this way, you can pass on to eternal joy of heaven, as passing over from what is imperfect to what is more perfect. What it really all comes down to is the necessity of depriving yourself from those false goods and pleasures which are already unworthy in themselves. The reason here is that there is nothing that can change the nature of evil that is intrinsic to these.

512: And will not your poor judgment be all the worse when it is simply a matter of giving up some very insignificant delight that would dishonor your right reason with its malice? Is it not true that you can enjoy abundantly other benefits promised to you? Why would you be willing to lose eternal delights which are promised to you and which, by contrast, and so incomparably advantageous to you? Even further, you really do not have to wait all that long, as in this life as well, you will be compensated with a superabundance of joy.

[3. Present Denial, and Eternal gain]:

513: 3. Because such deprivation will be compensated with an even greater delight:

In fact, even before condemnation to hell, a life of vice forms also in this life in its unfortunate followers, a very grave torment of bitterness and bother. By contrast, virtue is not slow in rewarding its noble lovers, nor does it wait long to crown them with immortal glory in heaven. But, it showers in the meantime with anticipated delights their entire life with sweet hopes nourished with pure pleasure¹.

514: But, pay no heed to my words, any of you who perhaps is used to looking at a mortified and virtuous life as one of melancholy and sadness: I would not be surprised. The sick person believes that wine is bitter and that music is bothersome, while the healthy individual enjoys its taste and takes pleasure in its sweetness. As long as Augustine lay in the filth of his own pleasures, he himself confesses that it seemed impossible for him to live, in that he could find no comfort outside of them. But, when he made the generous resolution to hold back his passion from those unclean pleasures, he himself tells us¹: O, how very quickly, how very soon was I able to experience the sweetness of being deprived from that vain sweetness! And those pleasures that just a short while before I had dreaded losing, were now a delight to leave behind - since You, o my God, You expelled them from me. You Who

are true and supreme Sweetness, You ejected them, and You entered Yourself in their place, much more sweet than every supreme delight.

515: For this, you could very well believe a person who, after having experienced the bother of illness, the sweetness of restored health is made all the more evident. Let us conclude, then. If the deprivation of some benefit and of a very vile pleasure is compensated not only with an immense excess of beatitude in heaven, but also with the superabundance of joy even on this earth, then what is the extent of poor judgment of anyone who would decide not to give them up - even at the cost of having to lose forever one's future perfect and ultimate happiness? I leave this for you to judge and do reflect upon for a while, until I catch my breath, and then will draw this to a conclusion.

516: PERORATION: And now, sinner, here you are, and all are waiting for your resolution. Yes, all await it. We wait for it impatiently as his desire of all of us, for whom the salvation of your soul is as much in our hearts as our own is. God knows with how much affection, we have begged today for your conversion, and we have not even yet given up the most fervent appeals to obtain it.

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

518: I can see that the Angels are preparing already to place everything in Paradise in motion for a new, most joyful festival, for the conversion of your heart which they feel is by now proximate. What more? Hell, too, is waiting, with indignant agitation and with fear of your resolutions. And I can almost see it yawning wide at your feet. This is the moment that decides - perhaps it will snatch you to have you lost forever. They are very much afraid, these enemies of yours, offering temptation that the vision of heaven and of so many eternal and incomparable blessings that are being promised to you, might in the long run move you to resolve to cast aside these very empty earthly delights, with which they have for so long filled your hearts' desire.

519: What do you think, then, what are you going to do? What do you decide? What are your resolutions? Are you still uncertain? Are you still doubtful? But, if you want to go on living as you now do, there is no need to make any resolution. Hell is for you. And I can already see that the demons are making even greater efforts to tighten your chains, while you delay making the resolution of escaping from their hands. Come on, now. If you do resolve, resolve in this very instant. The grace of

God does not know of slow preparations ¹. Have you, therefore, resolved to kick aside your unregulated passions? Yes, you have, I no longer have any doubts. It would be already an indication of poor judgment that you have not done this before; but, it would seem absolutely impossible that you do not do it at this moment.

520: Lift up your eyes boldly to heaven. Yes, heaven is yours. Already at this hour the Saints of heaven recognize you as their fellow-citizen. Jesus has already prepared the place that you are to occupy, the glory with which He wants to reward you. He already disposes the graces to assist you even unto the final realization. All the high-ways and by-ways of the heavenly city resound with most joy-filled chants and with most sweet music, with which they celebrate as a festival this most blessed moment of your conversion.

[Concluding Prayer]:

521:

O, my God, my Jesus! If this is the way it is, if this is the state of the matter, I cannot longer put it off. The proposal of this soul **who hands himself over to you** - by the words of a poor sinner such as I am, assisted by your grace - and by the intercession of so many prayers of such a pious and devout audience - have gained on this day even a single happy soul to be added to the squads of those blessed souls, like happy prisoners, conquered by Your grace - they now form the most solemn pomp of Your triumph, following Your glorious Ascension into heaven. If this is the way it is, then, I do not request of You any other consolations for myself, no other comforts in the hardships of my life and my spirit. This is enough for me, joined to the hope with which I trust that my innumerable sins are benignly condoned, I will be together with all of these, my devout brothers and sisters, after these few days, to enjoy your glory forever.

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Sources
OT

Ps 16:15	# 509	Ps 46:6	# 499
35:9	# 509		

NT

Jn 14:2	# 499	Ac 7:55	# 517
16:20	# 504		

Liturgy

4th Sunday after Easter	# 499
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Fathers and Doctors

St. Ambrose, <i>In Luc</i> , 2, 19. t. 1, 1288 E	# 519
St. Augustine, <i>Confessins</i> , Bk 1. t. 1, 69, B	# 509
<i>Confessions</i> , Bk 9, 1. 1, 157/B	# 514
St. John Chrysostom, <i>Ad Theod. lapsum</i> . 1,9. t. 1. 8/1 A # 502	
<i>In Psalm 124</i> , 2 t. 5, 216, 2/B	# 513

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[B] MISCELLANEOUS
THE SACRED HEART ¹

1755: Introduction:

The faithful direct their worship of **adoration to the humanity of Christ**. This adoration, by which the humanity and vivified flesh of Christ is adored, is **not adored on account of itself, as a mere flesh**, but insofar as it is united to the Divinity, this is one and the same adoration by which the Incarnate word is adored together with His own flesh.

So, a pious and due worship has been offered by the faithful to the humanity of Christ.

Therefore.

1756: 1. **Doctrine:**

Devotion toward the most Sacred Heart of Jesus is not new, nor erroneous, nor dangerous, as this has been approved by the Apostolic See.

The Faithful do not adore the Heart of Jesus separate from, or distinguished from His divinity, but **they adore it in so far as it is the Heart of Jesus**, this word which is inseparably united to the Person of the Word, in that manner in which that emptied Body of Christ in the triduum of His death, without any separation, or distinction from His Divinity, was adorable in the grave.

1757: The Holy See ¹, the Mistress of Truth [***The Roman Church is the Mother and the Mistress of all Churches - Council of Trent, Denz. 946***] has pursued this with thousands of Briefs with indulgences in order to favor this devotion and to spread it throughout Christianity.

a.. **The Apostles:** of this Devotion were:

- Father Colombiere, a religious of heroic holiness: **Claude de le Colombiere, was a most celebrated preacher, so fervent in the divine spirit, that it appeared from his sermons and the most sublime devotion which he nurtured, that he was seeking in all the greater perfection.** [This is from Concina, the tract of Penance, in Disc. 3, c. 6].

1758: - Margaret Mary Alacoque: was always honored by Benedict XIV with the title of Venerable [t. 4, De Beat., Book 4, part 2, c. 31, n. 20] - whom all of France followed to venerate her tomb. Her life was written by Msgr. Languet, one of the most learned and zealous Prelates that France ever had [cf. Ben. XIV, De Fest. D.N.J.C., Book I, c. 15, n. 5].

b. The Sacred Congregation of Rites asserts: **The worship of the Heart of Jesus is propagated in almost all parts of the world, with the blessing of their Bishops.**

The Roman Church granted to the Feast of the Sacred Heart its own Mass and Office.

1759: 2. History:

This Devotion to the Sacred Heart is not new.

It did not have its origin with Thomas Goodwin, a Socinian, or Calvinist heretic.

It is necessary to distinguish in this devotion its private cult, and that which is public. It is certain that this private cult was introduced much before the great saints.

a.. The Saints:

- In the Life of St Gertrude, printed in Venice in 1510, among the many devout exercises offered to the Sacred Heart, similar to those more familiar and public forms of ours, in chapter 5, 120, of the 4th Book, ***The Herald of the Divine Love***, p. 252, there can be read that on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, this Saint appeared to her, not that he had not spoken to her in his Gospel, and responded that for now she should first teach in order to come to know the Divine Word and that the sweetness and gentleness of His Heart is reserved to be discovered in the last times - so that from hearing these things there might be re-enchanted the world that had already become tepid and was languishing. **The purpose was that from hearing such things, this world, which had become old and weighed down with torpor, might be warmed anew and by the love of God.**

1760: - St. Mechtilde attests that the Son of God appeared to her and ordered her to venerate with every manner of **oblation** [***ossequio***] His Most Sacred Heart in the Divine Sacrament, and that there was no more complete book that contained the favors for this devotion obtained.

These two saints died two centuries before Goodwin.

- St. Clare each day greeted and venerated the Heart of Jesus, and called this exercise her delight.

- Similar **oblations** [***ossequi***] we read practiced by St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Brigid, St. Frances of Rome, St. Francis de Sales and by many other souls favored by God.

1761: b. Witnesses:

Blosius, the light of the Benedictine Order, spoke of this more than a century prior to Goodwin, as those devoted of the Sacred Heart speak of it today.

Lanspergius, a Carthusian Monk who died in 1539, spoke more than 100 years prior to Goodwin. In Letter 26 [Book 10 of Lanspergius; Works, called the 'Minor'] counsels all to keep the image of the Sacred Heart in a fitting place, in order to revere it often, and to kiss it, with the desire it ***kissing the very wood of Jesus' side and His wounded Heart.***

1762: The Venerable Father Ignatius of Nantes, a Dominican, who died in 1648, 30 years before making public the devotion of the Sacred Heart - and who was acclaimed a Saint by the people, and in 1650, in the Acts of the General Chapter, was listed among their religious outstanding in holiness - in his Meditations on the Most Divine Heart, printed in Florence by order of the Father General in 1643, writes:

Jesus Christ, from the very first instant of his conception, as He was in the spiritual heart the first lover of heaven and heart, so through the inflamed transfusions of the supreme part in the heart of flesh burned and died of love.

1763: *Christ understood perfectly the infinite malice of sin, contrary to the supreme good, and He detested and abhorred it infinitely, and transfused into the heart of flesh a continuous pain, one that was ineffable of immense dolor, whence the life of the Heart of Jesus was totally suffused with love and all with suffering. And because the Heart of Jesus of the mind and of the flesh is the most beautiful, the most candid, the most lucid and the most lovable - and all the eternal hearts, the most dear and the most loved by God, there is no one among the Saints who did not admire It, and who did not adore it, and out of thanksgiving who would not offer it always to the Eternal Father.*

1764: After the mid-way point of 1600, it became a public festival, nor did the English heretic have any part in it, in the occasion for which it was instituted. A great part the Venerable La Colombiere gave us with his printed retreat.

Also before him, Fr. Eudes, one of the most zealous Missionaries in France, had obtained from the Holy See a Papal Brief very generous in its indulgences for the Feast of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

3. Solemn Origin

1765: The solemn institution had its origin solely from the Prelates and Shepherds of the Church and from the Holy See. All this is proven with some evidence by Gallifet, in chapter 2 of his work in Latin, approved by Benedict XIV before he became Pope, in the year 1726 - and even more in the same work translated into French and dedicated to the some Pontiff in the year 1743 [Benedict Tetamo: **Concerning the true worship and Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**].

The first images were exposed in France with the authentic approval of the Bishops, and thus were the Feasts as well: as well as the New Offices and Masses. From the Holy See, there were added also the indulgences.

a. Spread

1766: The Confraternities, through the testimony of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, were erected canonically and favored with indulgences. These were erected in the churches of almost all the different religious Orders: the Benedictines, the Hermits and the Canons of St. Augustine, the Fathers of the Order of Preaches, and in all of the four classes of Franciscans and the two Orders of the Carmelites, the Trinitarians, the Celestines, the Servites, the Theatines, the Barnabites, the Camillians, the Somaschi Fathers and the Scolopi Fathers: and above all, in the most noble parish Churches, the collegial and metropolitan churches. There should also be remembered especially the Roman Arch-confraternity, to which Benedict XIV in 1751 privileged its altar.

The members of this are counted in the thousands. Among them, are the illustrious, the most learned priests, Bishops, Cardinals, and every condition of persons, from every walk of life, nation, order, secular and regular.

The number of these Confraternities with authentic registers of Rome up to 1765, was more 1,080.

1767: The Clergy of France in 1763 established this Feast in all the Dioceses of the Realm.

b. Object

The object of the Feast of the Sacred Heart: it consists in that marvelous and practically divine complexity of aspects, formed both of the bodily and wounded heart of Jesus, as well as by that most holy soul by which that Heart finds life - as well as from the Person of the Divine Word, hypostatically united to that heart, and from which it is divine - as well as from that immense love with which that heart burns - and from the many virtues of which the sacred Heart is the Symbol and the Seat - and also from the sufferings and the anxieties endured by this Heart. For indeed this complexity of aspects that are so sublime, so admirable, so divine, so lovable, that this is the authentic, proper and adequate object of the Feast of the Heart of Jesus.

The Advocate who implored and obtained in 1765 the Decree for the New Mass....

4. Theology

1768: It manifests a carnal wound, a spiritual wound.

a..

The prudent and most wise **Bride of Christ**, the Church, made ingenious because of her love, desired most ardently to see her **Spouse**, Jesus adored and beloved - and she studies further the more sweet and universal means and the more easy and efficacious incentives. And since human beings, made up of reason and the senses, are not moved very much by matters that are purely spiritual in order to have them fall in love with these sublime and invisible realities, she makes use of visible realities: such would be the Infant in the Crib, Christ moribund on the Cross; but also His Blood alone, His Name, His **Wounds**, the Christmas crib, the thorns, the lance, the Cross.

b.

1769: Thus, Benedict XIV notes that the Church never had the custom to solemnize with its own Mass and Office any of the divine attributes, or the internal virtues and abstract perfections of Christ, **unless under some sensible object that would clearly represent them, or under some sensible fact, or mystery, which renders them more vividly evident. The example of this would be that the Church does not venerate the 'patience' of Jesus Christ without any symbol, or mystery: but rather worships His**

Wounds, His **Passion**, His **Cross**. Not only should one never exclude from **the Feast of the Sacred Heart every sensible object**, but this simply cannot be done.

1770: Could there be found a more felicitous symbol of God's love? The innumerable relationships that the heart has with love in all human beings have already produced a universal sense, through which all the nations, both the most worldly uncouth as well as the doctors, the poets, the painters, the sacred and profane writers, all recognize in the heart and almost attribute to it love, and very often they confuse one for the other.

c.

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

His side, opened after His death, is used to show us that Heart, that same Heart wounded by the lance, that WOUND RETAINED IN HIS GLORIOUS BODY, render the Heart so sweet, evident, divine, so much so that it is impossible to venerate **the Wounded Heart without remembering and venerating His immense love**¹.

5.

1772: The Church has happily seen its plan carried out. With this sensible help: the Feast, Confraternities, indulgences, images, and in promoting for herself a devotion of this kind, she has seen Holy Communion frequented every First Friday of the month, and the renewal of the devotion for the Most Holy Sacrament, and to see on the most licentious of days, such as **Carnevale**, the Churches and oratories filled with people. And this is done in order to make reparation for the offenses committed against the love of Jesus, and seeing this all celebrated in a solemn and happy feast, not so much for its pomp, or the noise of the multitudes, but much more for the piety, the tenderness, the love of those devoted to the Heart. And generally the devout are reminded most often of the charity of Jesus and this love is returned with more fervor.

1773: The most beautiful praise of this Devotion is the solid and entire piety of one who professes it; and perhaps the greatest obstacle to professing it is the need to ask for it not only with external acts or vocal prayers, but also at least with a little loving gratitude and fervor.

1774: The authority of the Church is its greatest praise.

The opinion of the Reverend Father M. Bernardino Membrive, a Dominican, Preacher of the Catholic King, Provincial of Scotia, Consultor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, notes:

Reading the book by Gallifet, there was presented to my soul the prophecy of Simeon: 'He will be a sign that will be contradicted' [cf. Lk 2:34]. And I understood that that which happened then to the Person of Jesus Christ, happens in our time to His heart as well. I am persuaded that to combat the proposed devotion, and to impede that it be received, would be the same as depriving the Church of those fruits of piety which form her are usually produced.

Rome, from the Convent at the Minerva, February 26, 1726....

[The beginning of the Definitive writing]

1775: What is man that you should make so much of him? Subjecting him to your authority? [cf. Jn 7:17].

What is man? Create, o Lord, the heavens, the earth, decorate these with stars and plants, supply the earth with animals, fish and birds with a simple *fiat*. And then finally: **Let us make man to our own image and likeness** [cf. Gn 1:26]. **What is man that You would direct your heart toward him?** [cf. Jb 7:17] - making him the end of other creatures and in Your own image, capable of knowing You and loving You?

1776: Man became ungrateful after a few days and lost himself and his descendants: You promised us from his very seed a Liberator, who is your own Son. You gave Him up to death for us: *See what charity!* [cf. 1 Jn 3:1]. **What is man that You should place Your heart upon him?** [cf. Jb 7:17]

This Man put to death his own Redeemer, and in that same night that he betrayed Him, You instituted a sacrament of Love, in order to communicate Yourself to him, and to be with Him even to the consummation of the world. **What is man that You would set Your heart upon Him?** [ib].

1777: But, this man became cold toward Him, and further rejected this benefit, ground it under foot, and You place before his eyes in these last times **Your Heart, visibly wounded for him.** *What is man that You would set Your heart before Him?* [ib]

To provoke him to love you, You employ such industry of love. I understand, o Lord. You are an Abyss of goodness, of charity; and man is an abyss of ingratitude, of malice. **The one abyss of misery calls out for the Abyss of Mercy.**

1778: But, what if there were one who was so wretched that he would not only call out, but who would disdain, who would deride, who would insult this Mercy, calling this devotion - and I do not know if this is more through stupidity or wickedness - a

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STIGMATINE DEVOTIONS
=52=

new devotion, an erroneous devotion, dangerous - and very soon, as he is even more wretched, thus he needs even more the Mercy: let us prove to him that this devotion is ancient, it is solid, it is salutary, and descending with our charity even to the depths of his misery, in order to bring him help that he might, too, share in such mercy - or, let us lead him to esteem, admire, and to know this....

[INCOMPLETE]

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[II] JESUS,
THE TEACHER ¹

1779: *For the Grace of God our Savior has appeared ...* [Tt 2:11].

Grace: a gratuitous gift of Christ.

Has been revealed: because previously the Son of God lay hidden.

Grace: mercy, the remission of sins. Before justice appeared [in the flood; Sodom]. Previously there was nothing but sin.

And it made salvation possible for the whole human race. *There are no more distinctions between male and female: slave and free* [Ga 3:28].

Preparation for this school: God is the Teacher, Who therefore appears - by remitting sins and by infusing grace.

Grace has taught us that we must be self-restrained and give up ...all our worldly ambitions... [Tt 2:12].

1780: It is grace that instructs us. The execution of this is easy: it teaches and works with us.

We must be self-restrained and give up: not only flight: but also hatred and detestation.

Impiety: depraved dogmas, as far as the mind is concerned.

Worldly ambitions: voluptuousness, avarice, honors, as to what pertains to the heart.

Soberly and justly and we are to live religious lives in this world: as for what pertains to exteriors.

While we are waiting in Hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing [Advent] of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ [Tt 2:13].

A blessed hope: If our hope in Christ is for this life only... etc. [cf. 1 Co 15:19].

Blessed: because truly the supreme Beatitude is hoped.

It is Blessed: because it brings about the beginnings of beatitude.

The Advent of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ : there are two Advents: one of grace, and the other is of retribution.

[THE BEGINNING OF THE COMPLETE DRAFT] ¹

1771: **Has appeared:** two words, ladies and gentlemen, on this apostolic text that we have read this evening at Mass: since today, unexpectedly all instruction had to be lacking.

Today, too, ladies and gentlemen, due to an un-thought of accident, there had to be lacking to your piety that solid pasturage of the Word of God. So, I offered myself so suddenly and simply, in that it seemed to me that I should trust that the Lord would not all us to miss instruction altogether, on the day in which He was born, which He did precisely in order to instruct us. *For the grace of God has appeared...* [Tt 2:11]. Two words, therefore, out of love on this sentence of the Apostle.

1782: Let us see just who this Teacher is Who comes to teach - what His doctrine is = what are the rewards proposed to anyone who would profit by this School.

Who is the master: *The grace of our Savior...instructing us* [ib., vv. 11,12].

The Savior, who is Grace: the Grace of the Savior, for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. [Jn 1:17]

For all men: great excitement in learning:

PALUCH 6
STIGMATINE DEVOTIONS
=54=

1. The God Man: the Nobility of the Teacher. ***Blessed is the man whom You shall instruct, O Lord: and You shall teach him out of Your Law...*** [Ps 93(94): 12]. He is a Teacher Who teaches with deeds: ***Jesus began to do and to teach*** [Ac 1:1]
2. Grace: The Teacher at home - He is a Teacher who not only teaches but Who leads others to perform. - He moves us b gratitude, seeing us delivered from our sins...¹

††††

[III] A FEW LETTERS TO MOTHER LEOPOLDINA NAUDET

Letter 45:
'School of God'
[June 1, 1814]

9280 Very much Esteemed, Reverend Mother,

Since the Lord stands above all our internal contrasts, it only follows that we ought to keep the eyes of our confidence riveted upon Him, without ever being disheartened in any case. Since we are most sure that ***He has strengthened His mercy towards them that fear Him...*** [Ps 102:11]. What shall we do in recognition for so many mercies? We will do more than we thought, or could think, if now we just do what we should do. And what should we do right now? We should do that which a baby does with regard to his mother who holds him in her arms, and not wish ever again to be put down on the ground ...

9293: I am getting better little by little. In your charity, reverend Mother, please pray that I draw fruit from this **school** which the Lord has deigned to ask me attend, so that I might dispose myself to serve Him. Tomorrow I will begin to get up for meals, as up until now I have only got up in the afternoon...

†

Letter 92:
His 'Wounds'
[July-August 1825]

9415 Reverend Mother,

The news from Milan brought me great pleasure. May the Lord be praised.. The Emperor seems well disposed toward your Work. The Governor, assisted by Count Joseph Cipolla, and the Delegate, Baron Paul di Lederer, have indicated that they are in favor that which pleases their patrons, and these seem to be most favorable circumstances...

9418: Furthermore, we are living in times, that whether little is going on, or nothing at all, there is needed the greatest caution. It is necessary to go behind, following after the traces pointed out to us by Divine Providence, which goes on ahead of us....

I thank you for the little book of the life of Fr. Bianchi. I have read it with great joy; Would that I would know how to profit from it!. It seems that **my wound** is not going so well, if we can give credence to appearances, which so many times before, have deceived us. If it indeed it does heal nicely, then I will believe that it would have been due principally to the prayers of the holly Prince, and your own charitable concerns which would have obtained such a grace for me...

†

Letter 104:
Wounded, but not dead!
[May 15, 1826]

9447: Dear Reverend Mother,

I render supreme thanks to the charity of Your most illustrious Reverence, for the Novena and for the fascicle that you have lent me. The Lord has been helping me for a time much against my merits, with the prayers of His faithful servants, My health has begun to go downhill, but He wills **me wounded, and not dead.** In this way I will be able to serve Him, and not to abuse His graces, and to do that penance which is necessary for me to do. The work increases for the conversion of every manner of person, whose heart God has touched in this Jubilee. We need the assistance of many prayers in order to complete worthily our office of cooperators in the salvation of those souls that the Lord sends into our hands, in order that the knots and the bonds of their sins might be loosened...

†

Letter 130:
His Wounds
[March 9, 1828]

9509: Dear Reverend Mother,...

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

†

Letter 131:
Pray!
[March 18, 1828]

9511: Dear Reverend Mother ...

9512:The Lord once more took from me the Mass and Divine Office this morning, because there has begun to break open again **that little tumor on the knee.** We will see what this will take. In the meantime, I cannot move around. I will make the remembrance as best I can, but not at the altar, as I did yesterday. May Your reverence also pray for me, and do all you can to finish your work as soon as is possible. I am afraid of a storm breaking out, and therefore, it would be necessary then to have completed all this...

†

Letter 132
FIAT!
[March 19, 1828]

9513: Dear Reverend Mother,

I ought to thank God profusely for the charity of Your most illustrious Reverence for the prayers that you have offered, and asked for others, for my health. And even though the Lord did not hear these entirely due to other purposes of His, and for this I have to say: **Thy Will be done**. Nonetheless, I am sure, for the great confidence that I feel in the power of prayer, and for the divine goodness, that there would have been protection from some even greater danger.

Also last year on the Feast of St. Joseph, this illness began. This year, on the Vigil I had to go to bed because of a swelling that developed on the sole, and then up to the knee, it seems that it has infected some glands, and not without real suffering to touch. Thanks be to God, it has not spread as it seemed to threaten, but Dr. Gregory prudently condemns me severely to bed, and to certain interventions...

†††

[IV] A FEW LETTERS TO FR. LOUIS BRAGATO

Letter 2:
“Left in the Stigmata!”
[November 18, 1835¹]

9688: All of this was simply our duty. And since we have given willingly to our most beloved Sovereign your very person, which to us was the most dear and useful that we had, what price can we put on our poor holdings here? Now your debt is to God alone, Who, with his gifts, for which I thank Him, has made you grow **in wisdom and virtue, and holiness and justice before Him** [Lk 1:75], and with these signs of exterior honor wishes to exalt you before me.

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

†

Letter 4
[A Description of an Apostolic Missionary]
[December 1, 1837]

To the Most Reverend, most Honorable, and most Observant
Fr. Louis Bragato
Imperial Court,
VIENNA

Most Reverend, most dear and most honorable Fr. Louis,
9799: ...I come now to satisfy your charitable and fraternal curiosity, and to provide you with a bit of matter for your usual recreation after supper, as in the times of the famous Chilo! Fr. Marani on school days, is at the Stimate; evenings and on free days he is at the Dereletti. At the Stimate, he teaches his classes and studies a bit in the library for his preaching. At the Dereletti, on Saturday evenings and Sundays, he hears confessions and with great fruit for the people of that neighborhood. **The other evenings, he offers a Conference in Moral Theology for about 10 or 12 priests, as we used to do in days gone by at St. Firmus¹.** After his methodical presentation, he acts like Fr. Guerreri; he outlines and defines as the circumstances demand, and this is every day, the most intricate cases; and the Lord gives him the light and the prudence that is far from ordinary.

9700: On Thursdays' he examines as usual the clerics at the Seminary, and after that, receives his penitents in any manner and at any hour, interrupting his dinner, supper, and putting off his own rest. Similarly, on feast days, while he hears confessions in the Choir of St. Stephen's which will continue even to the time to be able to come then for the instructions at St. Sebastian's. which he will then continue until the Lord is pleased. The people listen to him very willingly, and it seems that the Word of God is not just thrown about, but is received in good ground. Before taking up the course of his instructions, I sent him to St. Zeno's, to preach the Octave for the Deceased...

†

Letter 5:
"Find Refuge in the Glorious Wounds"
[January 29, 1840]

9707: As for the rest, keep your chin up! And when you need a little joy, fly in thought to Fr. Michael's little room. And if you do not always have the wings ready to support yourself over the clouds, in the bosom of you God, **find your support in the glorious wounds of your Savior. Seek those things which are above, where Christ is** [Col. 3:1]. Sit there, as one of His people, in the beauty of that peace [Is 32:18]. All finishes and finishes soon, but that eternal peace never ends. And pray for us, and you will be remembered in our prayers....

†
†††
†

ST. GASPAR BERTONI
AND SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE STIGMATA

Presentation

[1] The actual Constitutions of the Stigmatine Congregation note the following:

10: The confreres live the mystery of Christ's Sacred Stigmata, from which the Congregation takes its name, as a memorial and sign of the Lord's Pasch."

42: "Our spiritual life is characterized by and finds nourishment in our traditional devotions.

"The Stigmata of the Passion is the sign of the Paschal Mystery which is perpetuated in the liturgy and in the life of the Church. We accept the invitation of Christ to contemplate those signs of the Passion retained in glory [cf. Lk 24:39; Jn 19:37; 20:27; Ga 6:17]. To draw from them as the Apostles did a wealth of faith and love.

"Entrusted to the Holy Spouses Mary and Joseph, we implore 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.

"We show our love and veneration for the Founder by becoming really interested to know his life, to follow his spirit and to spread his teaching [PC 2].

42.1: "In addition to those penances inherent in common life, each community will choose a special mortification to be practiced on Friday, in honor of the wounds of Christ.

42.2: "According to the norms of the Provincial Directory, each community will celebrate and promote in the best possible manner, the Solemnity of the Founder and the Feasts of the Sacred Stigmata and the Holy Spouses."

[2] These Constitutions, considered in a variety of General Chapters, offer the Congregation's repeated efforts to summarize devotions that would help the modern Stigmatine to live better the spirit of St. Gaspar Bertoni. It is well worth noting that in his time, before and well after him, the classical theology of the Catholic Church emphasized almost unilaterally the "Theology of the Passion and Death of the Lord", the Cross - **with very little, if any attention being paid to the Resurrection.**

[a] One reads, for example, in a recent theological study commenting on the Christology of St. Alphonsus de Liguori [1697-1787: Gaspar Bertoni was ten years old at his death] ¹ notes that for the great Doctor of the Church he saw God as Love, manifested uniquely by the **death** of His Son. This revealed "God as for us". The whole moral theology and spirituality of St. Alphonsus was to move his listeners to respond to **God-love made known to us through the death of the Most Holy Redeemer on the Cross.**

[b] St. Alphonsus had to deal with Quietism in various forms. Hence, there was **much more insistence on the Passion of Christ**, and the reflection on the Resurrection was left more to the religious quest of certain mystics. The Dogmatic

Theology of this time, **spoke little on the theme of the Resurrection**. In Alphonsus' times - before and after - the Resurrection was looked upon more as a personal reward, and it was given no soteriological role - despite Paul's words to the Romans [cf. Rm 4:25, etc.]. Through this entire era, there was hardly any use of the word "resurrection".

[c] For St. Alphonsus and his times, what was of major interest is that the Passion and Death of the Lord manifested to the Church the entire love of God. This mystery, that translates to the Church as "love", redeems the world in a super-eminent manner - wherever sin abounds, grace super-abounds [cf. Rm 5:12, ff.]. The Passion and Death are the font of all our hopes. **The open and bloody wounds, for St. Alphonsus, are inexhaustible fonts of grace and pardon.** In this plan of spirituality, the center of emphasis is **not the resurrection but the Cross in itself**, as the Victory of Love which conquers the wavering love of believers. There is little mention of **the Glorious Wounds and the Apostolic Mission** [cf. Jn 20:19, ff.]

[d] It might be said that St. Alphonsus gradually cited more the Gospel of John, and speaks more of the "**Glorious Cross**". The **Victory of the Cross** is in the triumph over sin, it is the victory over the lack of love. The victory of the Cross had a universal effect, and can leave no doubt in the hearts of anyone who would believe in it regarding God's love. **The emphasis was more on Hope than on Love.**

[e] With the passing of his life, Alphonsus went from his frequent citations of Paul and John to the **Letter to the Hebrews**, with its insistence on the theology of sacrifice and the **priesthood** of Christ. The redemption of the human race happened in the death of Jesus on the Cross. The Resurrection was not presented as having a determining soteriological value. In his four catecheses, the saint does mention the resurrection, but **not as a central element of our faith**. His preaching makes it quite clear that the Resurrection does not pertain to the theological center of that era. **In his use of Scripture, there are very few texts that make reference to the Resurrection of Christ.** The Resurrection is a Miracle.

[f] In the last years of his life, St. Alphonsus paid some further heed to the Resurrection. For him, the Resurrection is a mystery similar to the death of Jesus Christ. As Christ has risen, so will those who confess Him. The Resurrection pertains more to the "plenitude of salvation" - with the resurrection, there was initiated a new era in the Church. **In redemption, the emphasis was on divine wrath.**

[g] Alphonsus' insistence was on the Theory of Satisfaction as the interpretative model of the death of Jesus. The resurrection simply introduces the beginning of Jesus' permanent intercession before the Father. Our Hope is confirmed by the Passion of Christ, which satisfies - and by the resurrection, which has opened heaven. Christ has "paid" with His Passion for our sins - and offers us a guarantee of actual intercession, through His Resurrection ¹. **The devil is defeated.**

[3] The fact that St. Gaspar Bertoni had chosen but one image in his own room, and that of **the suffering Christ on the Cross**, would still not limit his openness

toward the integral Paschal Mystery. The Crucifix is still the main symbol for our altars - and in the rooms of many religious houses and rectories, the Cross still remains on the walls as a constant reminder. However, what was somewhat “**specific**” to **Fr. Bertoni** may also be traced in his writings, from his childhood poems, until his final letters to his confidant, Fr. Louis Bragato: **we may look for him in the openings of the Sacred Stigmata of our Lord, Jesus Christ.** Fr. Bertoni did not follow St. Alphonsus’ interpretation of the Apostolic Mission, nor did he follow him primarily in his understanding of our Salvation.



PART ONE
THE BACKGROUND

SECTION ONE:
SCRIPTURE

1. However, in all this, it must be remembered that for Fr. Bertoni that following **Sacred Scripture** and his perusal of the **Fathers**, [with special regard for **St. Gregory the Great**, and **St. John Chrysostom** - his main sources were the Angelic Doctor, **St. Thomas Aquinas** - and the model of the Stigmatine Founder's adult years, **St. Ignatius of Loyola**, and the great Jesuit theologian, **Francis Suarez, SJ [1548-1617]**. All of these authors, theologians and saints were much impressed by the integral Paschal Mystery, the Passion and Death, as well as the Resurrection and Ascension.

2. In his Introduction to the great classic by **Fr. F.X. Durwell CSSR**, *The Resurrection*¹, Charles Davis offered these insights in his Introduction:

...Most students are disappointed with the [classical] treatise on the Redemption. They do not find the rich matter and profound thought they expected. Appended to the long developments on the Hypostatic Union, the pages on the redemptive work of Christ seem thin and shallow. ..The epic of victory is reduced to the payment of a debt... The plain truth is that the average theology of the Redemption [was] truncated and its intelligibility maimed..[The argument went]: ...If redemption equals satisfaction, the Resurrection which is not work of satisfaction is not redemptive.

...St. Thomas, as so often, was an exception. He gave a masterly treatment of satisfaction and related ideas, but he went further. By attributing to the Passion, Resurrection and, indeed, the whole work of Christ an efficient causality in our salvation, he incorporated into his teaching, in Scholastic terms, themes associated more with the Greek than with the Latin tradition. However, this part of his teaching was not understood by his contemporaries or successors and only recently has it begun to exert its full influence. The concept of satisfaction, together with the closely related idea of merit [for which one must still be "way-farer"; the Resurrection occurred only after Christ's death], continued to dominate the doctrine of the West. Christ's death was understood as a sacrifice, but sacrifice was seen simply in these notions..."

...[This] is what St. Thomas meant when he said that all the mysteries of Christ were efficient causes of our redemption. A consideration of the various mysteries of Christ's life should be restored to the theology of Christ and not relegated to devotional literature...¹

3. Christ was 'delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification' [cf. **Rm 4:25**]. Paul states here clearly enough **the redemptive significance of the resurrection** and the indissoluble bond joining the death and resurrection in the one

mystery of salvation. Jesus Christ is the visible, sacramental expression in this world of the saving act of divine love. Every action of Christ is an expression of the divine saving purpose - the divine saving act was not a single holy week in Christ's life, but His entirely earthly sojourn. The whole history of Christ from beginning to end forms a dramatic and effectual sign in which God's saving purpose is set forth.

4. This is what St. Thomas meant when he said that all the mysteries of Christ were the efficient causes of our Redemption. A consideration of the various mysteries of Christ's life should be restored to the theology of Christ and not relegated to devotional literature.

a. This is what St. Ignatius of Loyola did in his *Spiritual Exercises* - in Week Two he considers the Incarnation and the Nativity; Week Three is the Passion, and Week Four is dedicated to the Resurrection.

b. This also because St. Thomas treats of the various mysteries of the Life of Christ, all as "redemptive": after treating of the Incarnation of Christ, His "Person" [cf. III, qq. 1-25], then the Angelic Doctor considers Mary, her Espousals, the Conception of Jesus, His Nativity, His Baptism, Temptations, Miracles, Transfiguration [cf. III, qq. 26-45] - then His Passion and Death, Burial, Descent into Hell [III, qq. 46-52] - and then, His Resurrection [III, qq. 53-59].

c. Insertion into Christ and His mysteries, and thus contact with the saving act of God, is made possible by the Church and her Sacraments. We are saved by the transforming power in the free response of faith, hope and charity. There are two vital truths in all this:

- the death and resurrection of Jesus remain **forever actual** in Him in glory;
- and the **identification of the Church** with Christ in glory - not merely one body with Him, but actually in the act of His death and glorification.

d. Classical theology was very good in noting that Christ's work of redemption was seen as consisting in His Incarnation, His Life, Death on the Cross. The emphasis was on reparation, satisfaction and on meritoriousness. But, not much time was given to Christ's personal triumph. This impoverished the entire theology of Redemption. The following are key texts of Paul that need to be noted:

".. And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is in vain, for you are yet in your sins..." [cf. 1 Co 15:17]

"... Christ died for all... died for them, and rose again..." [cf. 2 Co 5:15].

"...Who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification..." [cf. Rm 4:25].

5. The Synoptics this tradition gives the resurrection something of a background role in the mission of the Son. The time is accomplished - the idea of the Kingdom predominated and Jesus states that the time is accomplished - this is the time to repent and believe the Gospel [cf. Mk 1:15].

a. The new element in Christ's preaching is the insistence that his death must be an essential part of the messianic scheme. He has come to give His life as Redemption for the many [cf. Mt 20:28]. This Blood of the New Covenant shall be shed for the many for the remission of sins [cf. Mt 16:28]. Believers have to be a part of this destiny - the kingdom is coming, but the heralding of His death is vital. The Resurrection is closely bound up with the Son of Man's twofold mission to announce the Kingdom and to die for many. The Resurrection comes as the crowning point [cf. Mt 16:21; 17:22; 20:17, ff.]. Jesus is tortured, killed, and He rises on the third day. For Jesus, His Resurrection is as much a part of His mission as His death.

b. The death and resurrection do not exist merely side by side - His resurrection is His glorification. Christ had to suffer in order to enter into His glory. [cf. Lk 24:26]. The Apostles are sent out to convert all the nations [cf. Mt 28:18, ff.; Mk 16:15, ff.]

c. The Christian life is bound up with the story of the Resurrection [cf. Lk 24:46, ff.; Ac 1:3-8]. The summary of the three Synoptics is there was a redemptive death; the remission of sins is promised to those who do penance - but, the Kingdom and the resurrection take first place. The resurrection thus unites the two streams of doctrine that flow from Christ's Mission:

- the theme of the Kingdom;
- the theme of His necessary death.

6. The Earliest Teaching: [cf. 1 Th 15:3-5; Ac 2:22-36; 3:12-26; 4:10-12; 10:34-43].

a. 1 Co 15:3-5: **the first Creed in the NT** regarding the Resurrection. There is an expiatory value in Christ's death - the Resurrection is presented simply as a fact. Yet, the doctrinal understanding at this level of revelation might not have been complete.

b. Ac 2:22-36; 3:12-26; 4:10-12; 10:34-43: it is noted quickly that the Apostles are preaching a Paschal message. It is primarily the glorification of the crucified Jesus. The era starting with the resurrection is marked by a new relationship between God and His people. Within the Apostles' teaching, the resurrection of Jesus appears as essential, as the key mystery which opens the messianic era.

7. The IVth Gospel: Jn's gospel seems to have been written in the light of his own personal contemplation of Christ's divinity, and a religious experience lived chiefly in the Liturgy of the sacraments. With all the comparisons that are made, it is clear that he did not teach the idea of a Redemption merely through the Incarnation and faith. He greatly emphasized the flesh of Christ [cf. 6:52] - the expectation of a pending Glorification [cf. 17:1]. There is a highly developed *sacramentalism* throughout the 4th Gospel. Great importance is attributed to the Holy Spirit [cf. 3:5, ff.] - and the fact that Jesus had to return to the Father before the Holy Spirit could be sent. [cf. 16:7].

a. Bodily Humanity: Christ is clearly presented as quite beyond our reach [cf. 8:58] - and yet, he is most palpably physical [cf. 4:6; 20:27]. It is significant that while Mk opens his account of our Lord's preaching with the announcing of the Kingdom [cf. 1:14, ff.] - and Lk, the Evangelist of the Holy Spirit, starts with Isaiah's promise of the Spirit that is to come and with Christ's declaration that this is now being fulfilled [cf. Lk 4:18, ff.]. Jn places at the very beginning of Christ's public life a statement about His body, the Temple of the new era [cf. 2:19, 21]. This "somatic theology" reaches its climax in Jn 6. The gospel theme of Redemption through the Body of Christ runs parallel with the theme of the life-giving light, and salvation through knowledge. The sacraments and the resurrection are all closely linked with Christ's Body: in the Eucharist it is Christ's body itself that we are given, and in Baptism we are acted upon by the Holy Spirit [cf. 3:5] Who flows out of that body [cf. 7:38-39].

b. The 'Passage' Theme: this Gospel unfolds against the backdrop of the Exodus, that exemplar of the Paschal Mystery. This is all being repeated and perfected in the Word made flesh. The mention of the first two Paschs is followed by a veiled announcement of the coming death and glorification of the Lord [cf. Jn 2:19; 6:51, 2]. The third Pasch is spoken of just before the account of the end of Christ's life [cf. Jn 12:1, 7; 13:1] In His death, He is the Immolated Lamb, in Him the Pasch is complete.

c. The Immolated Lamb, Spouse: Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church [Jn 3:29; Rv 19:7; 21:9; 22:17]. He makes His first appearance amid the festivities of a Saturday village wedding, Cana of Galilee - with His disciples, His Mother, the "beginning" of the signs of the Church.

d. Explicit Texts: He promises that at **the Feast of Tabernacles** the **waters of salvation will flow from His Breast** [cf. 7:37, ff.]. As Good Shepherd, He promises the sharing of life forever [cf. 10:14, ff.]. His Father loves Him for laying down His life [cf. 10:17-18]. His death and resurrection are the first duties of the Lord as Messiah. Thus, Jn presents **a soteriology based on the Incarnation, but interwoven with a very rich paschal theme.**

e. Salvific Nature of the Resurrection: [cf. Jn 17] eternal life is a "light" - it is the "knowledge" of the Father and of Christ, sent by Him. This Life and Light will be diffused over humanity, once Christ is "glorified".

8. The Theology of St. Paul: more than anyone else, he is the great "**witness of the Resurrection.**"

a. The Resurrection is the Fundamental Principle: The coming of the Son of God into the world and the first moment of salvation coincide with the Resurrection. In Paul's speech he states that the promises made to the fathers have been fulfilled in God resurrecting Jesus [cf. Ac 13:32, f.]. He was established the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by resurrection from the dead [cf. Rm 1:4]. The resurrection is a beginning both for Christ and for our

salvation. It holds a position in his thought equivalent to the position held by the Incarnation in St. John's Gospel.

b. Rm 4:25: We need to believe in Him Who raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification. There are two aspects here of the one salvation. There is attributed to the Resurrection a distinct role in our salvation - the object of our faith is the God Who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead. We need to believe in the heart that God has raised Him up from the dead and in this we are saved [cf. Rm 10:9]. In Rm 4:25, justification is the effect peculiar to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

1.] In Christ all are made alive [cf. 1 Co 15:22]. Anyone who is in Christ is **a new creature** [cf. 2 Co 5:17]. The law of **the spirit of life** in Jesus Christ has delivered me [cf. Rm 8:2]. He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus [cf. Ep 2:6]. He rose for our justification: Christ in glory is the living principle through which redemptive action existing outside us is applied to us; we have no other form of access to the justice of God.

2.] Our Savior in glory forms the living sphere in which our justification is worked out. And the phrase "In Christ" defines the causality of the resurrection. The phrase "with Christ" specifies that this justification is effected by the same act of the Father by which the Son is glorified. Christ's raising up by His Father gives life to Christ and to us in Christ at the same time.

9. The Theology of St. Peter: we have been regenerated into a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, up to an inheritance incorruptible [cf. 1 P 1:3-5]. This "living hope" is to be raised up by the Christ who regenerates us. St. Peter's soteriology follows the familiar two-fold pattern of redemption: the death of Christ has expiated our sins [cf. 3:8] - the life-giving action of God upon Christ is the beginning of new life.

Reflections

[1] Any theory of the Redemption, or evaluation of Christ's death which does not include a recognition of the essential part of the Resurrection can hardly claim to be true - let alone complete.

[2] Following Christ's life on earth, His passage to Heaven is linked by His Resurrection. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus are presented in the framework of the Sacrifice. Through the Resurrection, the Church shares in the communion in the sacrifice.

[3] The Resurrection is what opens up the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Christ is raised by the Spirit, and transformed by the Holy Spirit of God.

[4] Among the effects of the Resurrection are seen the “Lordship” of Jesus Christ - He enjoys universal dominion, the Lord of the World to come, the Lord of the Angels. Born in the Spirit, as the perfect Image of the Father, He has opened up a life forever new.

[5] The Risen Christ exercises a priesthood as our Mediator, Great High Priest of Mercy in heaven, in eternal prayer for His People.

[6] The Resurrection of Christ is also seen as the Birth of the Church. This reality is also presented in these ways:

- **Mariological** - in conceiving Christ, Mary also conceives also the Church;

- **Kerygmatic**: with Christ’s preaching, the seed of God’s Word planted in the womb of Israel;

- **Eucharistic**: Holy Thursday Night: with the Institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood, the Church is born, the “Mystical” Body;

- **Soteriological**: with the soldier’s lance piercing the side of Christ, the New Eve is born;

- **Pneumatological**: on Pentecost, the Church comes into being.

[These are all aspects of the coming to life of the one Church].

[7] The Church lives her daily life in the Risen Christ. This life is Christ-like, Spiritual, a life in death, a New Creation, the ultimate victory of the Church, the Church is “Victim”, one, graced.

[8] Across the ages, the progress and the consummation of the Paschal Mystery in the Church goes on and on. The total possession of Jesus will occur only in the ***Parousia***.

[9] This Church is “Apostolic” and “Missionary, ”called to intensify internally, and spread outwardly. This is done through ministry and the sacramental life. The Church is assimilated gradually to the Easter mystery. This will be perfected in Heaven!

St. GREGORY THE GREAT

Fr. Bertoni seems to have followed this Great Monk and Pontiff in two great works attributed to him:

- his **Moral Commentary on the Book of Job**
- his **exposition *In Librum Primum Regum*** [Samuel].

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SECTION TWO:
St. THOMAS AQUINAS

A. The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ
[III, qq. 36-52]

Introduction:

[1] In his Preface to this Part, St. Thomas treats first of Jesus' Passion, then His Death, His Burial and finally, His Descent into Hell. Regarding the first point, the Passion, the Angelic Doctor treats of the Passion itself; the causes at work in this Passion, and the end-result of it.

[2] In this entire matter it is necessary to ponder deeply the Mystery of Christ's Personality, and the Redemptive Mysteries of His life on earth. These matters need to be read also from the light of faith, and in what manner **the three Persons of the Trinity cooperated in all this – a work *ad extra***.

[3] "Satisfaction", may be the analogy most developed by Thomists, **all is subordinated to God's Mercy** - may be described in this way:

a.] Mercy is that election of a Personal Will, proceeding from Love - hence, **it is always presupposed, the foundation, the first root, the First Cause of every other Divine activity**. God dispenses with more largesse through His mercy than the just proportion of things would demand, as in His Divine Justice: non-being, called into Being

b.] In Creation, all is produced according to Divine Wisdom and Justice; and all is produced according to Mercy, coming from non-being into being [cf. **I, q. 21, a. 4, ad 4^{um}**]. There is always both Justice and Mercy in all of God's actions; but, the first institution of reality, there is primarily a transition from non-being to Being [cf. **In Psalm 24, 10**]. Thus, **Mercy always precedes and justice follows**.

c.] In **IV Sentences**, St. Thomas saves the "contemporaneity" of Justice and Mercy - but, in his **Summa**, **Mercy is that primary election of His Will**. Hence, in both the plan of Creation, as well as in that of Redemption, **Mercy always precedes and triumphs**.

d.] The discourse on **Mercy surpasses all reason**, because it deals with what is the most proper to God - His goodness in mercy stands at the head of His Creation and regulates ultimate realities. Some theologians would attribute Creation to the Divine Omnipotence - and Redemption to Divine Mercy. However, St. Thomas did begin with this view, but his definitive position is:

e.] ... **maius opus est ut ex impio iustus fiat, quam creare caelum et terram** [it is a greater achievement that one become just from having been a sinner, than it is to create heaven and earth out of nothing!] - cf.

IV Sentences, d 17, q. 1, a. 5, q1a 1 ad 1 um;
I-II, q. 113, a. 9, Sed Contra [On Grace];
III, q. 43, a. 4, ad 2 um;
Super Evangelium Joannis, c. xiv, Lectio 3, nn. 1899, ff.]

... In quantum ad nobilius esse producitur quis per justificationem, quam per creationem... [God produces a more noble being through justification than through creation]:

IV Sentences, d. 46, q. 2, ad 1 um, q1a. 3, ad 3 um;
I, q. 25, a. 3, ad 3 um.

... Effectus Divinae Misericordiae est fundamentum omnium divinarum operum...

[The effect of Divine Mercy is the foundation of all the divine works] - cf. I, q. 21, a. 4.

f.] God properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one **loves equally, or even more** than he detested the offense [III, q. 48, a. 2]. Christ offered His most Precious Blood, shed through His Sacred Stigmata, as a **"theandric act of love"**, which God loves more than He hates all sins and crimes taken together. Essentially, Redemption is a **mystery of love**, both meritorious and satisfactory. Other aspects of this mystery are subordinated to this supreme love - we are indeed "bought" with a great price [cf. 1 Co 6:20].

[4] The Church has never defined precisely any one theory in the teaching on Redemption. However, it is necessary to note the following: the Nicene Creed presents us with the essentials: "... Who for us men, and **for our salvation**, came down from heaven ...became man ... He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate..." He was an oblation for us, the sacrifice for our sins. Jesus Christ, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity by which He loved us, merited satisfaction for us by His most holy Passion on the wood of the Cross, and made Satisfaction for us unto God the Father [cf. DS 1528, Council of Trent].

[5] The following theories of Redemption were much discussed:

[a] The theory of **Expiation, Substitution**, which speaks especially of the guilt of undergoing punishment. In support for this, there are many OT texts noted - this led to the theory espoused by many Protestant theologians regarding "Penal Compensation."

[b] The theory of **Satisfaction** which is more sublime and richer, especially as explained by St. Thomas.

[c] The theory of **Reparation**, which seeks to perfect the preceding theory, insisting more on this, that it is not the death, but **the loving will of the person dying that placated the Father** [St. Bernard]¹.

[d] Many others stress more **the Father's love for us**: God so loved the world that He gave up his only Son [cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16]. Christ loved us even unto

death [cf. Ph 2:5, ff.]. St. Thomas subordinated the first three to this last one, in that **the Mystery of Redemption is especially a mystery of love**. St. Thomas states that Christ suffered for us - that he offered satisfaction, reparation - but, he always affirms that **the foundation of their validity is Christ's theandric love, which is the source of all His merits**.

[6] All of this must be understood in the light of St. Thomas' treatment of the Attributes of God:

... Mercy and justice are necessarily found in all God's works... Now **the work of divine justice always presupposes the work of mercy, and is founded thereon** ... we must come to something that depends only on the goodness of the divine will... **So in every work of God, viewed at its primary source, there appears mercy. In all that follows, the power of mercy remains and works indeed with even greater force...** [cf. I, q. 21, a. 4].

Thus, God purely of His goodness created us, elevated us to the order of grace which is the seed of glory and gave us the Redeemer.

[7] **It is from the uncreated love of divine goodness that mercy proceeds inasmuch as good is self-diffusive, and then comes justice by reason of which the supreme Good has a right to be loved above all things**. But, first of all **the divine good is self-diffusive** in creation, in raising us to the supernatural order, and finally in God's free decree to restore this order by means of the Word incarnate ¹.

[8] Christ's oblation was an offering in which He gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race"

- first of all, because of the exceeding charity from which He suffered;
- secondly, on account of the dignity of His life which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of One who was both God and man;
- thirdly, on account of the extent of the Passion, and the greatness of the grief endured as already noted [cf. III, q. 46, a. 6].

†††

1. God's Love for His Son and the Redemptive Love of the Divine Son

a. God's loving one thing more than another is nothing else than His willing for that a greater good: because God's will is the cause of goodness in things; and the reason why some things are better than others is that God wills for them a greater good. God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe: because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a Name that is above all names. Nothing of this love diminished when God did not spare Him, but handed over His most beloved and only Son for the salvation of humanity. In this Jesus became the Victor - universal government was placed on His shoulders [cf. Is 9:6, ff.] [cf. I, q. 20, a. 4 c and ad 1 um.]

b. Jesus was convinced in His divine mandate that when He would be “lifted up” [on the Cross and in the resurrection] He would **draw all to Himself** [cf. Jn 12:32]. In the bitter conflict, God chooses the very best - the “Noble Guard” - to enter the most harsh area of the battle. After sending His prophets, in the final times, God willed to choose His Son - who came simply to do the Father’s will [cf. Ps 40; Heb 10: 5-9].

c. The Father asked of the Son the most heroic love - love of the good demands the reparation of evil. The stronger the love, the more it demands. God’s love demands the reparation of whatever ravages humanity, extends the kingdom of evil and darkness. The least of Jesus’ acts would have super-sufficed for the redemption of the entire world, united as His human nature is to His divine Person. By giving the last drop of His most Precious Blood, we are enlightened somewhat to the abysmal darkness of sin. The hatred of evil is merely the reverse of love.

d. It is Jesus’ infinite love for His Father that ‘moved’ Jesus to do His will so totally in the mystery of His redemptive life. It is only in this Mystery of Divine Suffering that we can have any understanding of human suffering ¹. Jesus Christ is the greatest proof of love that God can give the Church in making His only begotten, most beloved Divine Son **a Victim of love**.

e. What is most striking in Jesus’ love, whether directed toward His Father, or toward humanity is that it intimately unites the greatest tenderness and the most heroic strength and the most heroic strength in suffering and death. These two qualities are not even together in human love, but they are completely interdependent. Tenderness without strength becomes largely languor and affectation - and strength without mercy becomes severity and bitterness.

f. This tender and enlightened love of Jesus for His Father inspired Jesus and continues to inspire **Him in adoration and thanksgiving**. He Himself put it this way: God is a spirit; and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth [cf. Jn 4:24].

1.] Adoration springs spontaneously from His heart. He is happy to acknowledge that God is infinitely good in Himself, that He is our Creator and our Father. He acknowledges this in practice by bowing with love before His infinite majesty. Jesus even rejoices in His own abasement, in His hidden life, ignored by men. He empties Himself, in terms of His human nature, so that He may better recognize God’s infinite sanctity. We bow, genuflect as momentary acts of adoration - we have Holy Hours, and their beautiful services - all of this but a pale reflection of Jesus Who never ceased adoring His Father, from the first instant of His life until His death on the Cross. This adoration continues now and will forever, acknowledging the Heavenly Father’s infinite goodness and a Song of Praise to Him.

2.] His Thanksgiving is ceaselessly inspired in Christ - for God is not merely God in Himself, He is our benefactor - no one will ever receive more from Him

than has Christ. Jesus thanks God for Himself and for all of us, for the treasure of the supernatural life: Jesus offers His own Hymn of Thanksgiving: ***I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for having hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to the little ones.*** [Mt 11:25, f.]

g. The strength and generosity of Jesus' love are as great as its tenderness. From the first moment this love inspired in Him not only adoration and thanksgiving, but also reparation. In fact, while God is a benefactor, He is also a Father outraged, rejected by His children. Jesus from the first moment of His life offered Himself in the old Disciples' Prayer [cf. Ps 40] : 'Behold, I come!' [cf. He 10:9], the corner-stone of **His High Priestly Oblation of Himself.**

h. This same love, with which Jesus has loved His Father, and that love by which He was loved by the Father, is called ***agape***, that love infused into us as "Christian Charity." In Jesus' love for us we find the same two qualities: **deepest tenderness and heroic strength.** As humans such love is rare, short-lived, addressed to a few intimates. So often superficiality takes over, and does not reach the depths of the well being of the other.

1.] The supernatural tenderness of Jesus Christ for us all is infinitely deep - it is universal, limitless. He knows us each by name [Jn 10:3] - He seeks out the lost, the strays, the wounded, the afflicted. Come to Me, He tells us, all who are burdened and we will be refreshed [cf. Mt 11:28]. He seeks out the prodigal, loves the adulteress woman of Samaria, raises up Mary Magdalen. The bruised reed will not be quenched, broken [cf. Is 42:3]. This infinite intensity never spreads itself too thin - infinitely it embraces all who strive to do the Father's Will. Such as these are members of His family.

2.] The supernatural strength is manifested increasingly from Bethlehem to Calvary, from the crib to the Cross. The son of God has loved us all, and delivered Himself up for us [cf. Ga 2:20] Jesus bore the punishment that each of us should have had. In His victory on the Cross, this became the source of life and holiness, the source of consolation. He has left us the Eucharist that He might remain with us. ¹

2. The Prayerful Priesthood of Jesus Christ

a. Christ Jesus is risen again, is at the right hand of God, also makes intercession for us. Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ [cf. Rm 8:34, f.]. Jesus continues forever, has an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able to save forever them that come to God by Him, always living to make intercession for us [cf. Heb 7:24, ff.]. Before leaving, Jesus promised: If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with You forever..." [cf. Jn 14: 15, f.] . Jesus always living makes intercession for us - His is 'prayer' in the true sense of the word.

b. When we pray the Litanies, we do not say: 'Christ, pray for us!' - but, have mercy on us, hear us! This is to remind us that Jesus is not only man, but that He is God also. When we address a divine Person, it is God Himself we are addressing, begging Him to grant our requests [IV Sent., d. 15, q. 4, a. 6; q. 22, ad 1um]. In the heart of the glorious Christ, adoration and thanksgiving are ever alive. These are the prayers which are the "soul" of the Holy Mass. Let us ask Him to inspire us to pray as it is fitting, always in accord with God's desires.

c. The function of the priest is to be a Mediator between God and humanity, to offer up to God the prayers of the people, particularly sacrifice, which is the most perfect act of the virtue of religion, and to give people back the things of God - through preaching, through the sacraments, through spiritual leadership. The external oblation and immolation of the Victim must be a visible expression of the interior oblation of the priest, of his adoration, his supplication.

1.] The priesthood is all the more perfect in the measure that the priest, the Mediator between God and humanity, is the more united through interior oblation and immolation to the Victim that is offered up, and the more united to humanity for whom the Victim is offered up. The holier the priest is, the more perfect will be the sacrifice he offers up as the principal act of his priesthood. Christ is perfectly holy, being **one nature with God**.

2.] The more closely the priest and **Victim** are united, the more perfect will the sacrifice be. For the external oblation and immolation of the Victim are but a symbol of the inward oblation and immolation of the Priest. The more the Victim is pure, precious, and entirely consumed in God's honor, the more perfect will be the sacrifice. This is why Jesus' oblation is more perfect than all the holocausts of the OT - the entire Victim was consumed in God's honor, to signify that each of us needs to offer all that one is, has, or ever will be, to God.

3.] The more the priest and the **People** are united, the more perfect is the Sacrifice. For the priest must bring together all the adoration, petitions, reparation and thanksgiving of the faithful in one elevation toward God, rising up as the soul of the whole People. The more the People are one with the priest, the greater will be the homage, the worship of adoration given to God, and the more universal will be the effects of the sacrifice.

d. The purest of **Victims** is of infinite value, for it is the Body of the Word of God, torn and nailed to the Cross, sheds all its blood. The union of priest and victim cannot be any more perfect since Jesus is a **Victim** to the depths of His soul, plunged in sorrow also by universal abandonment.

e. What formally constitutes Jesus' Priesthood seems to be the grace of substantial union to the Word which makes of Him the Lord's Anointed One [cf. III, q. 17, a. 2] The Grace of Union, which is uncreated, for it is the Word Himself Who completes and possesses the humanity of our Savior, implies a unique priestly vocation and is the source of the habitual created grace by which Christ, the Head of

the Church, has immediate influence upon its members or communicates supernatural life to them. [cf. III, q. 22, a.2 ad 3 um]. Jesus is priest by reason of the Incarnation. His priesthood is substantial as is His sanctity, and it is from His priesthood that serves the priestly character of His ministers, impressed indelibly in their souls. And these priestly souls, He will give shepherds until the end of time. ¹

3. The Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, the Principal Celebrant at Every Mass: ¹

a. **The greatest proof of love is the perfect gift of self.** Generosity is essentially communicative, goodness is naturally self-diffusive. St. Thomas explains that it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others. Hence, it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature [cf. III, q. 1, a. 1; CG IV, c. 11]

b. He who is Sovereign Good, the fullness of Being, communicates Himself as fully and intimately as possible by the eternal generation of the Word, and by the ***spiration*** of the Spirit of Love. The Father, in begetting the Son, not only communicates to Him a participation in His Nature, His intelligence, His love - but He communicates to the Son **the totality of His indivisible nature** without multiplying it in any respect.

c. Thus, it was fitting that God should not be content merely to create us, and to give us existence, life, intelligence, sanctifying grace and a participation in His nature. Further, **God chose to give us Himself in Person**, through the Incarnation of the Word [cf. III, q. 1, a. 1].

d. Jesus, Priest forever, and the Universal Savior of humanity, has also for His part willed to give Himself to us perfectly throughout His life on earth, particularly at the Last Supper and Calvary. He continues to give Himself to us each day through the Eucharist. There can be no greater gift of Self than these riches of the Priestly and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Christ.

e. As God gives His entire nature in the eternal generation of the Word and the ***Spiration*** of the Holy Spirit, as God willed to give Himself in the Incarnation of the Word - so Jesus willed to give Himself in Person in the Eucharist. For St. Thomas it is with a view to the Eucharistic consecration that Jesus instituted the priesthood simultaneously with the Eucharist [cf. **III, q. 65, a. 3**].

f. The **interior oblation**, ever alive in the eternal priestly Heart of Jesus, is the soul of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and gives it its infinite value. Jesus Christ also continues to offer up to His Father our supplications, our reparations, our thanksgivings. But, especially it is always the same infinitely pure Victim which is offered up, the Body of the Crucified Savior, and His Precious Blood sacramentally shed on the altar so that it may continue to wipe away the sins of the world. In eminent manner, we continually make up, apply, whatever is lacking of the merits of the Lord in this day and age [cf. Col 1:24].

g. Jesus gives us Himself to us in each Holy Communion as food and drink - not so that we will assimilate Him to ourselves, **but so that we may become more and more like Him.** The Eucharistic and Priestly Heart of Jesus offers the daily and ceaseless Gift of Himself. Christ loved the Church, gave Himself up for her, that she might be without blemish [cf. Ep 5:25, ff.].

h. Jesus is thus the supreme Model of the perfect gift of self, a gift which in our own lives is meant to be more generous with each passing day. Each new consecration of the Eucharist is meant to bring into the Church a certain progress in the theological life.

i. After His Resurrection and Ascension, our Savior a priest forever, did not cease in the offering of the principal act of His Priesthood. The Eucharistic Celebration is a sacramental sacrifice substantially perpetuating in an un-bloody manner the Sacrifice of the Cross, of which it is a "Memorial" The Mass in substance is the same as that of the Cross, because it is the same Victim, really present on our altars, by the same principal Priest [Session 22, c. 2 of Trent].

j. The Mass is not merely a symbolic sacrifice, or the re-enactment of a past sacrifice, **for the Victim is really present. there is a real Oblation of the Victim** - the Mass is a true, un-bloody sacrifice which represents the bloody immolation of the sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus Christ is a Priest for all eternity - He continues to offer Himself up sacramentally in order to apply to us the satisfaction and the merits of His Passion. In His human capacity, He is the principal cause of this **continuing oblation**, which is **the chief act of His Priesthood**. This is the act to which His ministers ought to unite themselves as instruments, becoming in each Mass hopefully more conscious of this sacrifice.

k. Jesus Christ is the principal Priest at each Eucharistic Celebration:
- not only because He participates in it in a remote manner, in that He instituted the Eucharist as Sacrament and Sacrifice;
- not only because He once commanded that this Sacrifice be offered up in His Name until the end of the world.

Rather, He is the Principal Celebrant because He actually participates in it at the present time in two ways:

- He continually wills to offer Himself up through the ministry of His priests [Council of Trent];

- in His human capacity, He is the conscious and intentional instrument, always united to God, that truly produces the transsubstantiation and the graces that derive from the Eucharist.

l. Jesus' Interior Oblation is always alive in His Heart: the sacred soul of the glorious Christ never ceases to see God immediately, or to love Him above all else, to love us, and to desire our eternal salvation. It is equally certain that Christ in heaven does not cease to adore God and to offer up to Him a thanksgiving that will never end. His worship of praise and adoration will continue for all eternity. It will always be offered up by Christ and by His Church.

m. Prayer offered for others proceeds from charity - the greater the charity the greater the prayer. The divine order is such that lower beings receive an overflow of the excellence of the higher, even as the air receives the brightness of the sun. Thus it is said of Christ: Going to God by His own power, to make intercession for us [cf. IV Sent., d. 15, q. 4, a. 6]. The interior oblation which is ever ablaze in the Heart of Christ, is one of adoration, impetration and thanksgiving. This is the soul of every celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice and communion.

n. The Church of every age is invited to recollect herself under the wings of Christ's great prayer, so that he might present our prayers to His Father and thus increase the value of our adorations, supplications, reparation and thanksgiving - this is His "re-capitulation". We are invited to unite our oblations to His one perfect self-giving [cf. 1 P 2:2, ff.].

4. The Efficiency & Universality of Redemption ¹

a. For St. Thomas, Christ's Passion caused our salvation through Efficient Causality, by way of **merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption, liberation**: and all of these are **subordinated to Christ's merciful love for the Father and for us**. St. Thomas finds **all these different notions in Sacred Scripture and Tradition**. His task was to explain them as to their theological significance **in due order**.

b. These notions are of themselves subordinated as in the present enumeration beginning with the more universal and ascending to the less universal, and **they all presuppose Christ's charity, which holds the first place**. For Christ's act of charity is primarily meritorious, but it is strictly satisfactory only if it is laborious and difficult. A perfect sacrifice, such as a holocaust, is both meritorious and satisfactory.

c. For some Thomists, merit, satisfaction and sacrifice belong to redemption as **constitutive** elements - whereas, liberation and the efficiency of our salvation in the application of the merits and satisfaction of the Passion, belong to it as **consecutive** elements, or effects. The Merit, Satisfaction and Sacrifice for the human race is called **objective** redemption - whereas the **application** of this liberation and restoration to individuals is called **subjective** redemption. Thus, for some, the reading of Col 1:24: ["... It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own body to do what I can to make up for all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his Body, the Church..."] would refer to **subjective redemption, the application of Christ's super-abundant redemption in each age of the Church, with the passing of time**.

d. Jesus Christ practiced different subordinated virtues:
- **first of all**, is **charity**, to which "merit" strictly belongs - for the other virtues can only be meritorious as they are commanded by charity;
- secondly, He practiced justice, of which "satisfaction" is a part.
- thirdly, He practiced religion, to which "sacrifice" belongs.

The higher and the more universal the cause, the more does it include several modes of causality - but, in this complexity shines forth **the splendor of its unity** inasmuch as **all these elements manifest Christ's love for the Father and for us**. This orderly arrangement is seen to be all the more profound when it is remembered that Christ, the Head of the human race, could have redeemed the entire universe by whatever meritorious act, without any painful satisfaction whatsoever and sacrifice in the strict sense.

e. Christ's voluntary death was truly a sacrifice and the most perfect of all sacrifices. He proves this by saying: a sacrifice properly so called is something done for that honor which is properly due to God, in order to appease Him. But, Christ offered Himself up for us in the Passion [cf. Ep 5:2]. This voluntary enduring of the Passion was most acceptable to God, as coming from charity. Therefore, it is manifest that Christ's passion was a true sacrifice [cf. III, q. 48, a. 3 c] **motivated by the infinite, intra-Trinitarian love for the Persons of God for humanity**.

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B. The Resurrection and Ascension [III, qq. 53-59]¹

1. Christ's Threefold Victory: Over Sin, the Devil and Death

Presentation

[1] Christ stated that there would be distress for His disciples, but that He had **overcome the sinful world** [cf. Jn 16:33]. The Evangelist had told us: all that there is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life [cf. 1 Jn 2:16]. Christ overcame **the sinful world** by taking away its weapons of attack, the objects of concupiscence.

[a] Christ overcame **riches** by poverty, as He was indeed needy and poor [cf. Ps 85:1]

]b] He overcame **honor** by humility - and we are instructed to learn of Him, meek and humble of heart [cf. Mt 11:29]

[c] He overcame **pleasures** by suffering and hardship - being obedient unto death on the Cross [cf. Ph 2:5, ff.] - this is the "mind" of Christ Jesus.

[2] Christ also overcame the world by excluding the **prince of this world** [cf. Jn 12:31] - He despoiled the principalities and powers [cf. Col 2:15]

[3] Christ overcame the third great obstacle **Death** - in being lifted up, He will draw all things to Himself [cf. Jn 12:32].

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a. Victory over Sin

1.] Christ's first victory is over Original Sin - one man's sin led to condemnation - so, by the justice of one, all are led to justification [cf. Rm 5:8, ff.] Through Baptism Christ's redemption is applied one by one to those who are coming to the faith

2.] Christ's victory over actual sin is many times affirmed in Scripture: ***God is rich in mercy***, loving us even when we were in sin [cf. Ep 2:38].

b. Victory over the Devil

1.] The Prince of this world is cast out - as Christ is lifted up, drawing all to Himself [cf. Jn 12:31, ff.] The Son of Man appeared to destroy the works of the devil [cf. 1 Jn 3:8]. The appeal now is to put on the armor of God to withstand the deceits of the devil [cf. Ep 6:10]

2.] The Gates of Darkness will not prevail - Satan is conquered, and those whose robes are washed clean in the Blood of the Lamb will be welcomed home [cf. Rv 22:13]. By Christ's passion, humanity is freed from Satanic dominion [cf. III, q. 49, a. 1].

c. Christ's Victory over Death:

1.] In His glorious Resurrection, Christ gained victory for all over death. The Apostles appeal particularly to the Resurrection to confirm the truth of their preaching - without it, all would be in vain [cf. Mt 12:39; 16:21; 17:22; 20:19; etc.]

2.] There is an intimate connection between Christ's resurrection and the other mysteries of Christianity. As death is the effect of sin, by conquering death, we have a sign of His victory over sin. Through Christ we are freed of those things which we incurred through original sin [cf. CG IV, c. 79].

3.] This victory will be completed on Judgment Day when all will rise again. He has promised that if we eat His flesh and drink His blood, He will raise us up on the last day [cf. Jn 6:40, ff.]. The gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ has abounded unto many [cf. Rm 5:15].

2. Christ's Descent into the Underworld¹

a. St. Thomas lists a number of reasons why Christ should die:

- to satisfy for us sentenced to death because of sin;
- to show that He really was "man";
- that He might help us overcome the fear of death;
- that He might offer us the example of dying spiritually to sin;
- that by rising from death, He might show His power to overcome death, and instill in us all the hope of rising again.

b. In death, His divine nature remained united to His Body. What is bestowed by God's grace is destined to be permanent, and is not taken away without sin. With all the more reason, too, the divinity was not separated from His human soul either.

c. Christ's burial proved the reality of His death - by rising again from the grave, we are given **greater hope** of our own coming to life again **through the power of His resurrection**.

d. **It is of faith that Christ descended among the dead - this was not the "hell of the lost" - ascending on high, Jesus led captivity captive - He that descended is the same that ascended above all the heavens. Three reasons are alleged:**

- sin had brought death to the body - it was necessary then, for Christ to be among the dead;
- the devil was overthrown by Christ's victory - the souls in prison were thus released;

- He was able to enlighten those souls in darkness, already redeemed by the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ.

3. Christ's Resurrection and Ascension

- a. St. Thomas offers five reasons for the "necessity" of the Resurrection:
- for the commendation of divine **justice**, to which it belongs to **exalt the humble**; it was fitting that He be exalted by a glorious resurrection;
 - for our instruction in the **faith**; by Christ's Resurrection **our belief in His divinity is confirmed**; [1 Co 15:12]
 - **for the raising of our hope, because in seeing Christ Who is our Head rise again, we hope that we, too shall rise again** ;
 - to set in order the lives of the faithful so that we may also **walk in newness of life** [cf. Rm 6:4];
 - **to complete the work of our salvation** - because Christ was thus glorified in rising again, so that He might advance us to good things [cf. Rm 4:25]. For it was so ordained by God that only after the resurrection would the Holy Spirit be given, or the Apostles sent to preach [cf. Lk 24:47; Jn 7:39].

4. Christ the King, Judge and Head of the Blessed

a. **Christ the King:**

1.] The universal power of Jesus is manifested in the Baptismal formula He revealed [cf. Mt 28:19] - teach all nations, make disciples of all. His universal power includes the elect and angels as well. On trial, Jesus admitted His royalty - you say that I am! [cf. Jn 18:33, ff.]. This title is present in the Apocalypse He is the King of kings [cf. Rv 1:5].

2.] There are reasons why He is the universal King:

- He is the natural Son of God and heir;
- **He is the Redeemer of the universe - which He bought and paid for at a dear price. [cf. Heb 1:2]**

3.] His claim for Kingship rests on various titles:

- the hypostatic union;
- plenitude of created grace; in this, He excels all other creatures. He has the highest degree of light in glory and charity.
- His Redemption is an acquired right, due to His Sacrifice on the Cross. In this, He transcends the angels - and thus, He now sits at the right hand of the Father.

b. **Christ as Judge**

1.] In His human nature He exerts judiciary power over all the angels, as regards the dispensation of graces granted through them and their accidental rewards. He gives essential rewards only in accord with His divine nature.

2.] Judiciary power befits Christ in all human affairs. The Father has given all judgment to His Son [cf. Jn 5:22] He is the Lord of the living and the dead - and we will all stand before His judgment [cf. Rm 14:9, ff.].

c. **The Head of the Blessed:** He preserves all the blessed in being - He preserves the light of glory. Glorious as man, He adores the Father, thanks and offers Him His whole mystical body. It is truly right and just for the Church always and everywhere to thank and praise the Lord in His majesty, adored by angels and dominations. The Glorious Christ is adored by the Blessed and He receives their thanksgiving.

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COROLLARY
TEXTS FROM St. THOMAS AQUINAS
on the
RESURRECTION

[cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Vol. 35, The Resurrection of the Lord [III, qq. 53-59]. Latin Text, English Translation, Introduction, Notes & Glossary. C. Thomas Moore, OP. Aquinas Institute, Dubuque IA. Blackfriars. Great Britain. Eyre & Spottswode Ltd. 1976; cf. also: Rev. J. S.. Considine, OP, S.TLr.. STM, "The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ", in: *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Literally translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benzinger 1920; 1948. Vol. II, pp. 3426-3438, passim].

Introduction

[1] Christ died, and thus was conquered by death - however, He arose by His own power from the dead, and therefore He was the Victor over death. Death was indeed a manifestation of the Power of Sin, but Christ met it as its Conqueror He died willingly and freely to accomplish all things ordained by His Father. His was a unique work: the atonement for sin and the opening of the Gates of Heaven to all human beings.

[a] St. Thomas treats of the sufferings and death of Christ right after His miracles and immediately after His most exceptional miracle, the miracle of the Transfiguration.

[b] These are all aspects of the "deep realities" of our faith which the Spirit reveals to us and which we must know and live by, if we would attain to the life of the Spirit. These revealed truths are the great mysteries of our faith, as the mystery of three divine Persons subsisting in one divine Nature - the mystery of the Second Person. the Person of the Son, subsisting in two natures - and the mystery of the God-Man satisfying, atoning, redeeming, **satisfying - redeeming - atoning - through divine Mercy**, for the sin committed by human beings.

[2] In the secret of Eternal Wisdom, and of the free eternal decree, hidden from the knowledge of the angels who dwelt the most intimately with God in heaven, and manifested to the world by the most striking and convincing theophanies, the Word of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity made flesh: For it pleased the Father that in Him all His fullness would dwell, and that through him He should reconcile to Himself all things, whether n the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross.." [cf. Col 1:20].

[a] In classical theology, the language adopted to present this mystery has been predominantly "**juridical**": God could have adopted another plan to right the damage done by sin [cf. III Sent., d. 20, q. 1, a.4] - that would have been a "deliverance" from sin, and not a "redemption" from the "debt", because no "price" would have been paid.

[b] Eternal Wisdom itself determined the price of our redemption, that includes the idea of “ransom”: you have been bought at a great price [cf. 1 Co 6:20]. Because of this, we should not become slaves of sin [cf. 1 Co 7:23] It includes the idea of “satisfaction”, and includes the idea of **Liturgical Sacrifice**: it is an “expiation” and a “propitiation” moving God to regard humanity with favor.

[c] It eventually includes the idea of the **Priesthood of Jesus Christ** - His sacrifice includes the idea of deliverance and restoration, and the idea of “merit”.

[3] Therefore, the revealed data on “Redemption” includes many notions, all of which are subordinate to the loving Mercy of God:

- In relation to God it is a satisfaction and sacrifice;
- in relation to Jesus Christ it is a voluntary substitution or vicarious atonement, a free and yet obedient act of suffering and death on the Cross for humanity;
- in relation to man it is a deliverance from slavery and a restoration to grace and glory.

[4] All these ideas are developed by St. Thomas, III, q. 48: Christ procured our salvation:

- by way of merit, satisfaction, atonement;
- by way of sacrifice;
- by way of ransom, or redemption;
- by way of instrumental causality.

[5] For St. Thomas, as for Scripture and Tradition, the Redemption is an act which is absolutely free and gratuitous on the part of God - infinite love and unbounded mercy decreed it. Throughout tradition, this work of redemption has always supposed it to be the result of Divine Mercy. For St. Paul, reparation is always gratuitous [cf. Rm 3:24]. For St. Thomas, this work of reparation is always a work of mercy, since man of himself could never satisfy for the sin of all human nature - thus God sent His Son to satisfy for all [cf. III, q. 46, a. 1, ad 1 um]. God was not obliged to right the damage of sin. Christ has offered to the Father a superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the world. This conclusion is more than a theological theorem: it is a dogma of faith. There is no formal, explicit definition of this teaching, but it is equivalently defined in the Creeds and the teachings of the Councils: “... Jesus Christ suffered for us and for our salvation...” The divine Redeemer took upon Himself the penalty of our faults, without any culpability of sin and that He offered to God reparation equal to and even above the offense made to God by all the sins of the human race. This dogma is amply supported by the following:

[a] Sacred Scripture:

- in the OT, particularly Is 52-53 prepares us for the coming of Christ [cf. Mt 8:17; I P 2:22]. Jesus, the Suffering servant, has expiated for sin and saved the world: by His wounds, ours are healed.

- in the NT the ideas of substitution and satisfaction are sustained. Christ bore our sins and took them away [cf. Jn 1:29]. He took away our sins, being sinless [cf. 1 Jn 3:5]. He gave His life as a ransom for many [cf. Mt 20:28]. We have been redeemed by the innocent Lamb [cf. 1 P 1:18]. We are bought and paid for, we are not our own [cf. 1 Co 6:20]. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep [cf. Jn 10:11, ff.] His Blood has been shed for the forgiveness of sins [cf. Mt 26:28].

[b] The Apostolic Fathers: these were the men who could have known the Apostles personally - and, as would be expected, they give the same rich meaning to "redemption." They were convinced that Christ's sufferings were "Vicarious satisfaction." By His Blood, Jesus brings about our redemption - His flesh for ours, His soul for ours.

[c] The Latin Fathers: present the same teaching. St. Ambrose noted that He took our sins that He might crucify our sin in His flesh. St. Augustine notes that He took on Himself the curse for our sins - by His death, He paid the debt of the entire human race. His oblation is of infinite value.

[d] The Greek Fathers were also consistent in noting that Jesus Christ paid our considerable debt in our place.

[6] St. Thomas Aquinas placed his entire theological development on the teachings of Scripture, Tradition and the Fathers who preceded him [cf. III, q. 48, a. 2, ad 1 um].

[a] The Head and members are as one mystic person and therefore, Christ's satisfaction beings to all the faithful as His members. Jesus is Head over the Church [cf. Ep 1:22]. By one man comes the resurrection of the dead [cf. 1 Co 15:21]

[b] The Redeemer enjoyed a two-fold grace: personal and capital grace. By this latter, He is consecrated King and Head of the faithful through which He obtained the right and per to merit and satisfy for them.

[c] It is one and the same grace that produces these two effects [cf. III, q. 8, a. 5] just as it is the same sun that both heats and lights. He is our Head and all His gifts can bring profit to us, His members.

[d] All theologians agree that Jesus' satisfaction super-abounds more than all the sins f all human beings of all times - but, the theological pinions are in the reason, or the source of this superabundant value in the work of Christ:

- the abundance of offense existed, but there is a superabundance of grace through Jesus Christ - where sin has abounded, grace has super-abounded [cf. Rm 5:20] For St. John Chrysostom the work of Christ is a vast ocean which far surpasses a drop of water [cf. Hom. 10, ad Rom.] One drop of Christ's Blood, in union with the Divinity, would have sufficed for the salvation of all worlds.

- St. Thomas had noted that one loves equally or more than He has detested the offense - hence, in Jesus' love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race, for various reasons:

- first, because of His exceeding charity;
- second, on account of the dignity of His life. This fundamental argument is based on the union of the two natures, human and divine, in the one Divine Person.
- it was because of His excessive love that God willed the death of His son [cf. Jn 15:13].

[7] Jesus Christ accomplished all this because He loved humanity unto death, even death on the Cross. By His death on the Cross,

- He satisfied the justice of God;
- freed us from sin;
- broke the power of Satan;
- restored us to grace.

[a] The Resurrection of Christ in Scripture is linked with his death: it is an integral part of element of the redemption. His death opened the gates of heaven - His resurrection prefigured and restored to us a life which had been lost by Adam's sin [cf. Rm 4:25]: He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

[b] It was only after the resurrection that the Apostles were to go forth and preach the faith, through which we are saved [cf. 1 Co 15:14].

[c] The resurrection is a cardinal dogma of our faith. The reality of the resurrection can be proven from Divine Revelation. Christ positively predicted that He would arise [cf. Mk 10:34; 12:40; Lk 18:33; Jn 2:18].

[8] It was necessary for Christ to rise from the dead - but, this is a necessity flowing from the divine plan. St. Thomas offers five reasons for this [cf. III, q. 53, a. 1]: thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and should arise again from the dead on the third day [cf. Lk 24:46]. St. Thomas offers five reasons:

- for the commendation of Divine Justice;
- to confirm our faith [cf. 1 Co 15:14]
- to strengthen our hope [cf. 1 Co 15:12];
- to encourage the faithful to live a Christian life;

- finally, to **complete the work of our salvation: He was delivered up for our sins, rose for our justification [cf. Rm 4:25].**

[a] The resurrection of Jesus is the prototype and the cause of the general resurrection of humanity [cf. 1 Co 15:20]. By virtue of this example of our Head, we profess that there will be a resurrection of the flesh for all the dead [cf. D-S # 286].

[b] By reason of His Divinity Jesus Himself was the principal efficient cause of His Resurrection. Christ arose by His own power. His Body was transfigured by certain qualities: agility, impassibility, **subtlety** and agility.

§§§

q. 53: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Here St. Thomas offers his five reasons noted above, for the 'necessity' of Jesus' resurrection:

- to fulfill the requirements of divine justice: since Christ, through charity and obedience to God humbled Himself to the extent of death on the Cross, it was necessary that He be exalted by a glorious resurrection.

- to increase our knowledge in faith, confirmed by His resurrection: He lives now through the power of God [2 Co 13:4] - our preaching would be useless without the resurrection [cf. 1 Co 15:14]; by the resurrection, one is freed not only from death, but also from the necessity of dying again, an even greater event.

- to increase our hope - as our Head is risen, we hope that we will, too - no one can say now that there is no resurrection from the dead [1 Co 15:12] I know my Redeemer lives [cf. Jb 19:25, ff.] - the hope in our hearts is that we will raise on the last day.

- for the instruction of the faithful - that we might live a new life [cf. Rm 6:~4] We must be dead to sin, alive for God in Christ Jesus [cf. Rm 9:11]. Christ's resurrection was necessary to increase our knowledge in faith. Our faith, however, is in both the humanity and the divinity of Christ, and belief in one is not sufficient without belief in the other.

- as a complement to our salvation - by His resurrection He was glorified that He might move us towards what is good - He was raised to justify us [cf. Rm 6:4].

His is a "personal" union of the divinity and humanity - not a union of nature, such as body to soul By this union of soul to body a higher state was attained with respect to his nature, but not to his person. Strictly speaking the Passion of Christ achieved its effect with regard to the removal of evil - his resurrection was both the first instance and the model of the good effects produced.

The things that preceded His coming prepared for it, so also grace is a disposition for glory. For this reason, those qualities of the state of glory, for the soul perfect enjoyment of God - and for the body, a glorious resurrection - should first of

all be present in Christ, the author of glory. On the other hand it is more fitting that grace be present first of all in those who are ordered to Christ.

q. 54: The Qualities of the Risen Christ
[a. 4: the Wounds which appeared in His Body]

“Sed contra”: when Christ appeared to His disciples, they were in a state of alarm and fright and they thought they were seeing a ghost [cf. Lk 24:37]. They thought that He did not have a true body but an imaginary one. To eliminate this misunderstanding Christ added: Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have [cf. v. 39]. Christ’s body, therefore, was not imaginary, but real. [a.1].

That Christ’s body was glorious in His resurrection is evident for three reasons:

- first of all, his resurrection was the model and cause of our own resurrection [cf. 1 Co 15:12, ff.];

- secondly, Christ merited the glory of the Resurrection by the humility of His passion. His troubled soul [cf. Jn 12:37] gave way to the glory of His Father’s name [cf. v. 28];

- thirdly, at the first moment of conception, Christ’s soul was glorious in the perfect enjoyment of divinity [cf. III, q. 14, aa. 1, 2; 45, a. 2]. It was by way of exception that the glory of his soul did not overflow into His body - but this was so that the Mystery of redemption might be accomplished through the Passion of Christ. As soon as the Mystery of the Passion and death were fulfilled, and Christ’s body once more united to his soul, from His soul immediately overflowed into His body - thus, His was a glorious body. [a.2].

Whether Christ’s body should have risen with its wounds [a.4]: The Lord said to Thomas: put your finger here - give me your hand.. [cf. Jn 20:27]. It was fitting that in the Resurrection, Christ’s soul should take up once more a body with wounds, for these reasons:

- firstly, for the sake of His own glory - He preserved His wounds not from any inability to cure them, but that there might be a perpetual sign of His glorious triumph [Ven. Bede]. In the bodies of martyrs, their wounds are not a deformity but in glory a sign of dignity. From these wounds will shine forth a beauty which is not from the body, but the result of virtue [cf. St. Augustine];

- secondly, these wounds are ordered to strengthen the hearts of the disciples in their belief in Christ’s resurrection;

- thirdly, so that during Christ’s prayer to His Father for us, He might manifest constantly the type of death He bore for the sake of humanity;

- fourthly, so that by placing before their eyes the very marks of His death, He might show those whom He redeemed by this death how mercifully He came to their aid;

- finally, to show on judgment day how just condemnation will be.

These **wounds** which remained in Christ's body are not wounds of corruption or of defect. Since they are signs of virtue, they are ordered to manifest a greater degree of glory. There even appeared in the places where the wounds were a special type of beauty.

Although the openings made by the **wounds** involved a certain rupturing, this was more than compensated for by the greater glory of their appearance. Thus, Christ's body was not less integral, but more perfect. Thomas not only saw the wounds, but touched them. Pope Leo's comments on this by stating that for Thomas' personal faith sight alone was sufficient - but, he was working for us and so he touched what he had seen.

Christ wished the scars from his wounds to remain in his body for other reasons besides the strengthening of the disciples' faith. The scars, therefore, had to be permanent. In Augustine's words: I believe that Christ's body is in heaven in the same state in which it was when it ascended there. In Gregory's statement: If, contrary to the teaching of Paul, there would have been a change after the resurrection, this would mean a reversion to the state of death. Only a stupid man would affirm this for it would mean a denial of true resurrection of the flesh. Thus it is clear that the scars which Christ manifested after the resurrection never left His body afterwards.

q. 55: The Manifestation of the Resurrection

A public deed merits a public reward. In Augustine's own words, the clarity of the resurrection is a regard for the humility of the Passion. **Both the Passion of Christ AND His Resurrection are ordained for our salvation: He rose for our justification [cf. Rm 4:25].** There are certain things which are in the realm of our future glory - and these, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, surpass our human knowledge.

There was a greater degree of love shown by these women towards the Lord, since they remained although the disciples fled. And so, they were the first to see the risen Christ in Glory.

The Apostles were also able to offer eye-witness testimony to Christ's resurrection: for they saw with their own eyes the One in Whom they believed, Christ alive Whom they knew to have died. But since the beatific vision is attained through that hearing which pertains to faith, so, too, they ultimately attained the vision of Christ risen from the dead only through the message they had first heard from angels.

The company of Christ with His disciples was a frequent occurrence before He ascended into heaven: this was for their consolation. Thus, Paul tells us that He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time and then He appeared to James [cf. 1 Co 15:6, f.], but there is no mention of these appearances in the Gospels.

By certain very evident signs He showed that He was truly risen from the dead. Christ gave His disciples these signs of the resurrection for two purposes:

- first of all, their hearts were not readily disposed to believe in the Resurrection. They were so slow to believe and He reproached them [cf. Mk 16:14; 24:25];

- secondly because of these signs the disciples' testimony was rendered more efficacious: what we have seen with our own eyes, and what we have heard and touched with our hands, this is our testimony [cf. 1 Jn 1:2]. Thomas believed - he saw the wounds of Christ, and believed [cf. Jn 20:29]. The fact is that He still bore His wounds. [cf. Lk 24:39=40; Jn 20:20, 27].

Christ manifested His Resurrection in two ways:

- first, by the evidence of witnesses; two types were used: the angels who announced the resurrection to the women; the second testimony, is Scriptural proofs used by Christ Himself.

- secondly, by proofs or signs. Three were offered:

- first of all, a body which was real and solid, not a phantom appearance, or ghostlike body. The sense of touch assured this [cf. Lk 24:39];

- secondly, Christ's body was presented as human, with physical traits which could be seen by human beings;

- thirdly, Christ's body was numerically identical with His body before the resurrection: the **wounds** demonstrated this: Look at My hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed! [cf. Lk 24:38, 39].

In another manner He showed His disciples the truth of His resurrection - from His soul being untied again to His body Operations attributed to the three types of human life show this:

- on the nutritive level, eating and drinking with His disciple [cf. Lk 24: 30, 43];

- on the sensitive level his replies to the disciples' questions [cf. Jn 21:21-211] and His greeting when He arrived in their presence showed that he has sight and hearing [cf. Lk 24:36; Jn 20:10, 26].

- on the intellectual level we find his conversations with the disciples and his use of Scriptural arguments with them [cf. Lk 24:25; Ac 1:3].

Especially important in this regard are the Scriptural proofs.

q. 56: Christ's Resurrection as 'Cause'

St. Thomas reasoned that Christ's resurrection can be attributed to the **Exemplar, Efficient** or **Meritorious** causality.

Whatever is first in a given genus is the cause of all that comes after it. Christ's resurrection is the first in the order of our resurrection. The Son gives life to anyone He chooses [cf. Jn 5:21] The natural order of things, which is of divine institution, works in this way: a first cause acts upon what is nearest to it and thus extends its effect to other things more remote. So, for example, fire first eats the surrounding air and through the warm air heats bodies farther away. Dionysius refers also to God as the One who illuminates substances closest to him through whom others more distant are given light. Therefore, to the Word is attributed the immortal life bestowed on the human body to his person, and so through him resurrection is worked in all others.

While it is true that the power of the principal agent is not restricted to act in a pre-determined way with respect to the instrument, once the course of action is chosen together with any taken instrument, that becomes a cause of the effect. The Resurrection of Christ is not, strictly speaking, the **meritorious** cause of our resurrection. It is the **efficient** and **exemplar** cause:

- The **efficient** causality is through the humanity of Christ in which the resurrection took place and which is like an instrument acting in the power of divinity; the effect is more specific in the case of **exemplar** causality because the death of Christ, by which he was deprived of mortal life, is the cause of the destruction of death in our behalf.

- And just as all the other things which Christ in His humanity accomplished or suffered for us are saving acts through the power of His divinity, so, too, is His Resurrection the **efficient** cause of ours through the same divine power whose proper effect is to raise the dead to life. By reason of **efficient** causality, which depends upon the power of God, it is fitting that Christ's death and resurrection effect the destruction of death, as well as the resurrection of life.

- Christ's passion is the **meritorious** cause as well [cf. q. 48, a. 1].

Christ's Resurrection operates **instrumentally** with a power effective not only for the resurrection of the body but also for the resurrection of the soul. Two things are implied in the soul's justification:

- the remission of sins;
- the newness of life, which is the result of grace.

In both cases the effect brought about by the power of God is said to be caused by Christ's death and resurrection. The resurrection more properly causes the newness of life through grace, or justice: "... He was put to death for our sins, i.e., to take them away, and He was raised to life to justify us [cf. Rm 4:25].

q. 57: The Ascension of Christ

Christ's Ascension provided an additional element to divine glory, not as an essential requirement of this glory, but insofar as the **fittingness** of place was concerned. Only in heaven could His heavenly body be at home and this in a way is part of His glory.

Christ's Ascension brought about our loss of His bodily presence, but gave us something more useful:

- first of all our faith, which is of things not seen, was increased The Spirit comes to convince the world of justice [cf. Jn 16:8]
- secondly, our hope is lifted - He has gone to prepare a place for us and He will return to take us with Him [cf. Jn 14:3]. With His human nature in heaven, He provides hope for our own.
- thirdly, to increase our charity towards heavenly things Let your thoughts be on heavenly things... [cf. Col 3:1, ff.] Where our treasure is, there is our heart Mt 6:21].

The descent can be applied to Christ in two ways:

- first of all when we say that He descended from heaven, and here the attribution refers to the God-Man in His divinity. There is no local motion implied in this descent from heaven, rather it should be called *kenosis* : He emptied Himself to assume the condition of a slave [cf. Ph 2:6, f.] We should not say, however, that by this condescension He lost anything of the plenitude of His divine power. Rather He assumed our nothingness, and in His descent from heaven He left nothing behind, but assumed our earthly nature in the unity of His Person.

- Another text which refers to Christ and says that He descended right to the lower regions of the earth [cf. Ep 4:9] [*ad inferos*], involves local motion. Consequently, this reference is to Christ's human nature.

Christ's Ascension is the **cause** of our salvation in these ways:

- first of all, His ascension prepared a way for us to heaven [cf. Jn 14:2] He walks at our head to lead the way in front [cf. Mi 2:13] Christ is our **Head**, and we are members of His body and follow Him to the place where He went before us: so that where I am, you may be, too [cf. Jn 14:3]
- secondly, just as the High **Priest** in the OT entered the sanctuary into God's presence to represent the people, Christ entered heaven to intercede for us [cf. Heb 7:25]. The presence of His human nature in heaven is itself an intercession for us, for God, Who exalted the human nature in Christ, will also show mercy towards these for whose sake this nature was assumed.

- thirdly enthroned in heaven as God and Lord, Christ from above showers upon men His divine gifts. He rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things [cf. Ep 4:10] with His gifts

Hence, Christ's Ascension is the cause of our salvation through **efficient** and not through **meritorious** causality. this was shown to be the case also in Christ's resurrection [cf. q. 56, a. 1 & 3, & 4]. Christ's Ascension is the cause properly speaking of our ascension because sin which prohibits our entry was removed and heaven was **merited** for us. Yet, more directly Christ's ascension is the cause for through it, He initiated as our **Head** what we as His members share in union with Him.

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SECTION FOUR
St. IGNATIUS of LOYOLA

Presentation: The Risen Christ in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, Preparation for the Life of an Apostolic Missionary in the Constitutions.

[1] For an understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola it will help to have clearly in mind their general outline. They are divided into four 'weeks' of meditations, but the term 'week' is flexible. They were intended as a preparation for living the *Constitutions*.

[a] The **First Week** corresponds roughly to what is called the "**Purgative Way**" in the spiritual life, i.e., it is devoted to purifying the soul and putting one's life in order. The aim of the Meditations of the First Week is to arouse sorrow and contrition in the one making the *Exercises* as he reflects on the disorder of his life: his sins, and how he has failed to move effectively toward his final end. This Week is designed to purify the soul, root out its inordinate attachments to creatures, and enable one to amend his life through grateful love and surrender to Christ the Redeemer. With these dispositions of soul, one is prepared to undertake the Second Week of the *Exercises*, or retreat.

[b] In the **Second Week** the Meditations are drawn from **the Public Life of Jesus Christ**. The aim of the Second Week is to persuade the exercitant to an interior knowledge and love of the Person of Jesus Christ, so that he may adapt his life to the model, identify himself with Christ as the concrete norm of Christian perfection. This assimilation to Christ is brought about by a series of Meditations on the Mysteries of His private and public life, and by the four key Meditations on the Kingdom, the Two Standards, and Three Classes of Men, and the Three Models of Humility. The '**Kingdom**' Meditation is designed to arouse the greatest enthusiasm for close **following of Christ** in poverty and humility, conquering the obstacles to His Kingdom in one's own soul and preparing for the apostolate.

[c] In the **Third Week**, the exercitant is invited to ponder the **the Passion of Jesus Christ**. The Third Week of the *Exercises* is concerned with the Passion of our Lord and is intended to confirm the retreatant in the options he has taken to follow Christ more closely by increasing his grateful love for Christ and his sorrow for his sins through study of Christ's sufferings.

[d] The **Fourth Week's** Meditations are from **His Risen Life**. The Fourth week of the *Exercises* develops meditations on the Risen Life of Christ and is intended to engender unselfish love, joy in Christ's glory and an unchanging trust in Christ the Consoler.

[2] Crowning the whole work of the *Exercises* is the Contemplation of Obtain Love, which synthesizes the movement of the Four Weeks so that one will **live life exclusively for God in joyous service, finding Him in all things and all things in Him**. The cycle of the *Exercises* is now completed; the assimilation of the soul to

God, it is hoped, is final, and the soul is fixed in a permanent state of divine consolation, given wholly over to His love and service.

[3] It was at one time the fashion to study in detail the sources supposedly used by the Saint in the composition of his *Spiritual Exercises*, and some interpreters thought they could identify entire sections as taken from the spiritual writers. However, Ignatius himself tells us clearly where he found his inspiration. In addition to the interior illumination of grace, the sifted lived experiences [his own, and those of others cf. DV 8: contemplation, study, magisterium, and lived experience - to whom he had given the booklet to be read], Ignatius drew chiefly from three books:

[a] *The Imitation of Christ* : Ignatius tells us that he first made the acquaintance of this classic during his stay at Manresa. There is no doubt that its influence on his thinking was profound, for he referred to it as the devotional book he liked most and echoes of its doctrines appear throughout the *Exercises*, especially the tender love for Jesus Christ inculcated in the Second and Third Weeks.

[b] *The Life of Christ, by Ludolph of Saxony, a German Carthusian* [sometimes referred to as simply "the Carthusian."]: This was translated into Spanish by a Fray Ambrosia Montesino 1503, and it had deep influence on Ignatius. While convalescing from his deep leg wound received at Pamplona, the Saint read the book with avidity - copying in red ink the words of the NT which so movingly brought Jesus' deeds and words before him - the words spoken by our Lady, he copied in blue ink. He made lengthy excerpts from this source. Under the influence of Christ's drawing power, this generosity, this aristocratic reverence for God's majesty, and this freedom of spirit were to be turned to divine pursuits.

[c] *The Golden Legend, in the Spanish translation of Goberto Vagad*: Once he had learned of the great deeds that Augustine, Dominic and Francis had done for Christ, his natural magnanimity of soul was elevated and inflamed. A new kind of "competition" was opened up to him - far from the jousting contests and game that inspired his sense of "honor."

[4] The overall purpose of the *Spiritual Exercises* : commentators have widely differing opinions:

- one immediate end is to discover God's will for the disposition of one's life, vocation;

- however, the stress that Ignatius puts on "election" is not only one's state in life, but anything that pertains to progress, or sanctity;

- a more general end is service of the Church, learning in all things to love and serve Jesus Christ. By imitating Jesus Christ we will avoid undue attachments that could hinder spiritual progress.

- the *Exercises* were intended to be useful to many classes of people, but especially for the more generous souls from whom *the greater service* and love of God could be hoped.

[5] The ***Spiritual Exercises*** touch on so many important aspects of the spiritual life that they may justly be called a summary of the most profound principles of ascetical theology. Marked as they are with a deep concern for **the apostolic mission** in the Church through complete conformity to the will of God, they contain practical principles to arrive at it, some of which are positive and some are negative. The central positive principle is the imitation of Christ our Lord, the **exemplary cause** of all Christian perfection. to achieve such imitation requires the destruction of egotism, pride and worldly attachments. ¹

[6] St. Gaspar Bertoni preached a course of the ***Spiritual Exercises***, which have come down to us from September 13th - 20th of 1810. These may be found in the ***Manoscritti Bertoni, II, ## 2104-2682.***

[a] In this same Volume II of the ***MssB [## 2683-3192]*** there is another set of "Recollections for the *Exercises*", which evidently was another Retreat.

[b] Further in this same Volume II of the ***MssB [## 3193-3811]*** there are the papers for two courses of Retreats that the Stigmatine Founder preached to the Clergy of Mantua, October 4-13; 17-26th of 1816.

[c] In ***Mss B III [## 3812-4597]*** we find the Founder's papers for a series of Retreats and Missions - as for the Vestition of John Mary Marani in December 1805 [the Founder's first successor as Superior General].

[d] There is a course of Spiritual Exercises for the year 1806, in St. Paul's in the Campo Marzio section of Verona [cf. **III, ## 3887, ff.**].

[e] At **Mardi Gras** time in 1806, Fr. Bertoni preached a retreat to brother Priests and to the Marian Congregation of St. Paul's Parish in the chapel of the Nuns of St. Francis de Paola [cf. **III, ## 3965**].

[f] There follows in this same **Vol. III [## 4329]** his sermons for the Penitential Triduum to St. Rocco, in the Cathedral, for protection against the cholera epidemic, in 1831.

[g] Then finally his Retreat to the "Acolytes" [Seminarians] of November 22, 1810 [**Vol. III, ## 4440, ff.**].

[h] At this point in Vol. III begins the long series of the Founder's 13 Conferences to Seminarians on St. John Chrysostom's Commentary on Genesis - dated perhaps in December 1811 [**Vol. III, ## 4615**].

[i] Next would be Fr. Bertoni's 73 Meditations from St. Gregory the Great's Commentary on First Kings [Samuel] - which may have begun in Nov. 1810 that overlaps then into Volume IV [cf. **Vol. III, ## 4853, ff.**].

[j] Finally, there are his 41 Conferences on St. John Chrysostom's Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew [IV, ## 7341, ff.].

†††

A. A Look at the Text of the *Spiritual Exercises*

The very first Spiritual Experiment of St. Ignatius in his Constitutions is the enjoined to make the ***Spiritual Exercises*** for one month:

CSJ n. 75: The **first experience** consists in making the *Spiritual Exercises* for one month, or a little more or less that is to say, in the candidate's examining his conscience, thinking over his whole past life and making a general confession, meditating upon his sins, contemplating the events and **mysteries of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ our Lord**, exercising himself in praying vocally and mentally, according to the capacity of the persons, according to what will be taught to him in our Lord, and so forth.

The giving, or the preaching, of the ***Spiritual Exercises*** then becomes utilized as the Jesuit Constitutions unfold, as one of the Apostolic Experiments, also in preparation for Profession to the Fourth Vows – and one of the ministries of the ***Professed***.

1. THE FOURTH WEEK [SE ## 218-229]

218: The First Contemplation is on the appearance of the Lord Jesus to his Blessed Mother after His Resurrection from the dead.

299: **The Resurrection of Christ our Lord** - the First Apparition.
First Point. He appeared to the Virgin Mary. Though this is not mentioned explicitly in the Scriptures, it must be considered as stated when Scripture says that He appeared to many others. For Scripture supposes that we have understanding, as it is written: 'Are you also without understanding?'

Prayer. The usual Preparatory Prayer.

46. Prayer. In the preparatory prayer I will beg God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of His Divine Majesty.

219. **First Prelude.** This is the history. Here it is how after Christ expired on the cross His body remained separated from the soul, but always united with the divinity. His soul, likewise united with the divinity, descended into hell. There he sets free the souls of the just, then comes to the sepulcher, and rising, appears in body and soul to His Blessed Mother.

220 Second Prelude. This is a mental representation of the place. Here it will be to see the arrangement of the holy sepulcher -

[# 47: First Prelude. This is a mental representation of the place.

Attention must be called to the following point. When the contemplation or meditation is on something visible, for example, when we contemplate Christ our Lord, the representation will consist in seeing in imagination the material place where the object is that we wish to contemplate. I said the material place, for example, the temple, or the mountain where Jesus or His Mother is, according to the subject matter of the contemplation.

In a case where the subject matter is not visible, as here in a meditation on sin, the representation will be to see in imagination my soul as a prisoner in the corruptible body, and to consider my whole composite being as an exile here on earth, cast out to live among brute bars. I said my whole composite being, body and soul.]

- and the place or house of our Lady. I will note its different parts, and also her room, her oratory, etc.

221: Third Prelude. This will be to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for the grace -

[# 48: The Second Prelude. I will ask God our Lord for what I want and desire.

The petition made in this prelude must be according to the subject matter. Thus in a contemplation on the Resurrection, I will ask for joy with Christ in joy. In one on the Passion, I will ask for sorrow, tears, and anguish with Christ in anguish.

Here it will be to ask for shame and confusion, because I see how many have been lost on account of a single mortal sin, and how many times I have deserved eternal damnation, because of the many grievous sins that I have committed.]

- to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord.

222: The First, Second and Third Points. These will be the usual ones as presented -

[# 194: First Point. This is to see the persons at the Supper, and to reflect upon myself, and strive to draw some profit from them.

 Second Point. This is to listen to their conversation, and likewise seek to draw fruit from it.

 Third Point. This is to see what they are doing and to seek to draw some fruit from it.]

- in the contemplation of the Last Supper.

223: Fourth Point. This will be to consider the divinity, which seemed to hide itself during the Passion, now appearing and manifesting itself so miraculously in the most holy Resurrection in its true and most sacred effects.

224: Fifth Point. Consider the office of the Consoler that Christ our Lord exercises, and compare it with the way in which friends are wont to console each other.

225: Colloquy. Close with a colloquy, or colloquies, as the circumstances suggest, and at the end say, *Our Father*.

2. NOTES

226: Note 1. In the subsequent contemplations, **all the mysteries from the Resurrection and the Ascension inclusive** are to be gone through in the manner indicated below. As for the rest, throughout the whole Week of the Resurrection, let the same form be used and the same method observed as were followed during the entire Week devoted to the Passion.

The first contemplation on the resurrection, given above, will serve as a guide [cf. **## 219-221**]. The preludes will be the same, but adapted to the matter being considered. The five points [cf. **## 222-224**] will be the same.

73, ff. Additional Directions. The purpose of these directions is to help one to go through the exercises better and find more readily what he desires. [There follow here practical enjoinders] [cf. **## 73-81**]

- In all the rest, for example, with regard to the repetitions, the Application of the Senses, the shortening or lengthening of the mysteries, etc., the Week devoted to the Passion may serve as a model -

[# 133: Note. Sometimes it will be profitable, even when the exercitant is strong and well disposed, to make some changes from the second day to the fourth inclusive in order to attain better what is desired. Thus, the first contemplation would be the one on rising. Then there would be a second about the time of Mass, a repetition about the time of Vespers, and the Application of the Senses before supper.

208 Second Day ... [practical suggestions]

209: Note for Seventh Day. ..[practical suggestions]

227 Note Two. Ordinarily, it is more in keeping with this week than with those that have passed to have four exercises a day, instead of five.

In that case, the first will be on rising in the morning, the second about the time of Mass, or before dinner, in place of the first repetition. The third, about the time of

Vespers, will be in place of the second repetition. The fourth, before supper, will be the Application of the Senses -

121, ff. The Fifth Contemplation. This will consist in applying the five senses to the matter of the first and second contemplations [There follow here some practical points ... ## 121, etc.]

- to the matter of the three contemplations of the day.

In making the Application of the senses, attention and more time is to be given to the ore important parts and to points where the soul was more deeply moved and spiritual relish was greater.

228 Note 3. Though in all the contemplations a definite number of points, say three, or five, etc., the one who is contemplating may make use of more, or fewer as seems better for him. For this reason it will be very useful before entering on the contemplation to foresee and determine a definite number of points that are used.

229: Note Four. In the Fourth Week, a change is to be made in the second [cf. # 74 of the *Exercises*], sixth [cf. # 78], seventh [cf. # 79] and tenth [cf. # 82] practical guidelines.

The second will be, as soon as I awake, to place before my mind the contemplation that I am to enter upon, and then to strive to feel joy and happiness at the great joy and happiness of Christ our Lord.

The sixth will be to call to mind and think on what causes pleasure, happiness, and spiritual joy, for instance, the glory of heaven.

The seventh will be, as far as there is reason to believe that it might help us to rejoice in our Creator and Redeemer, to make use of the light and the pleasures of the seasons, for example, in summer of the refreshing coolness, in the winter of the sun and fire.

The tenth will be, instead of penance, to attend to temperance and moderation in all, except on days of fast and abstinence ordained by the Church, which must always be observed if there is no legitimate excuse. ¹

†††

Here follows:

Contemplation to Attain Love of God
[“Contemplatio ad Amorem”]

B. A Few Reflections on This Text of the Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*

Presentation ¹

[1] First of all, the ***Constitutions for the Company of Jesus***, and the ***Spiritual Exercises*** of St. Ignatius, are not only two masterly works from the pen of the soldier Saint. Rather, these are two writings that **complement each other**. The ***Spiritual Exercises*** are the internal means, the substantial nucleus of the Saint’s own life. In the ***Constitutions*** there lives the same spirit, but with a concrete body

which gives to the exercitants vigor and energy. The ***Spiritual Exercises*** really need the ***Constitutions*** as the soul to the body. The ***Constitutions*** provide the body, and incorporation of the ideals of the Retreat. And the ***Constitutions*** need the ***Exercises*** as the fruit of the seed. The ***Constitutions*** translate the spirit of the ***Exercises*** - the rule of life reflects what the Lord Himself wrote on the hearts of the first Jesuits in their retreat under St. Ignatius. This spirit was communicated to them in their making their ***Spiritual Exercises***.

[2] There is a clear juxta-position of the generating principles of both books, if we do not want to speak of a substantial identity at base.

[a] The fundamental criteria of the ***Exercises*** form the back-bone of the ***Constitutions***. The formulae which regulate the Jesuit life, even to the least prescriptions: it must always be that which "***would be pleasing to the divine glory***" - "***to look always to the glory of God our Lord***" - "***the greater spiritual profit for souls and the glory of God our Lord***" - we must "***do all so that God Our Lord will be the more served and glorified in all things.***" These are not mere formulations that drop out of mid-air. They are, instead, the unchangeable criterion of the principle and foundations of the entire life.

[b] All the natural and supernatural means that can contribute to the fulfillment of this end - creatures of the ***Exercises*** - are taken under examination in conformity to this norm. All serves for the Glory of God, i.e., if they reach God, then they are acceptable to St. Ignatius. If some works do not do that, then Ignatius would leave them aside. All is admitted which would lead to the achievement of the end for which he established the Company of Jesus. In the last analysis, the Company of Jesus is that institution that seeks to lead human beings to live and move within the orbit of the ultimate principle and foundation. St. Ignatius himself expresses this in his Fourth Part: **to assist souls and one's neighbor to achieve the last end for which they were created** [# 307].

[3] The Ignatian ideal is simply to "***serve and please the Divine Majesty - to seek in all things God our Lord, putting aside in so far as this will be possible, the love of all creatures, to place it in the Creator of them all***". The ***Constitutions*** provide concrete means that ought to be realized in this detachment from creatures and this life-long quest for, and service of the Lord. The ideal is to set aside all that pertains to creatures, honors, riches. The greatest and most intense duty is always to seek in our Lord, one's own greater abnegation and continual mortification in all things.

[4] From the Reign of Christ and the Two Standards, according to Nadal, sprang the basic idea of the Company of Jesus. In the two standards there is manifested how one is called to develop his own vocation. In the ***Constitutions*** there are specified those who were enemies, the field on which the battle needs to be waged, the objective of one's activities, and the concrete manner to follow the eternal King.

[5] The most powerful asceticism of abnegation is based on the third manner of humility and forms the strong framework for all of the *Constitutions*. The principle is:

- to surrender 'glory' even to the point of accepting injuries, false witnesses, insults,
- and to be thought of as being mentally imbalanced;
- striving for the ideal of giving up one's own will through the most exacting obedience, recognizing in the Superior, no matter who he is, one taking the place of Jesus Christ,
- and all this even when there are difficult matters and those repugnant to each one's sensual nature;
- conforming oneself totally to seek and to accept as one's own whatever the Superior seeks and maintains, in all matters.

[6] The challenge goes on: even more to try oneself in spirit and especially for the greater abnegation and humility, each one has to be content that all one's faults and mistakes become known to one's superiors by any person whatsoever outside of Confession [Const. # 63]. These and other fundamental means were the ones that St. Ignatius employed in his *Constitutions* to lead his followers to perfection. They are all little building-blocks drawn from the unfolding of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

[7] The Company of Jesus - just as the *Spiritual Exercises* themselves do - is meant to love. The love is presented as the intrinsic motive and the most suited and efficacious element to realize the purpose of the Society. If one sets aside love for creatures, this is so that love for God might have more sway - all things must be placed in reference to the Creator and all loved in Him. The interior law of charity and the love which the Holy Spirit writes and impresses in hearts have to be the underlying motive in all their actions. Only an intense love for God can provide the strength to realize that total and absolute self-renunciation which the *Constitutions* demand from the inner-most depths of a believer. One is asked to hand over to God one's own freedom and inclinations, in the quest for the most sublime ideal.

[8] The force of these *Constitutions* consists in the living of the spiritual life, based on the life-long practice of the *Spiritual Exercises* which runs throughout the legislation. Their greatness and most efficacious guarantee is to provide the most adequate organism for the full and competent service of the Church.

[9] Therefore, between these two books there is a fundamental identity, a single spirit but a diversity in function and form:

- the *Spiritual Exercises* strive for the spiritual renovation of the individual; these have before them a determined amount of time in which to be accomplished - they go to the depths of the soul in striving to deepen one's personal relationship with God;

- the *Constitutions* have a clearly social, ecclesial purpose - these legislate for the remainder of one's life, regulate not only the internal actions, but also

those relationships with one's superiors, equals and students. In a word, these establish a juridical bond and give practical norms of action.

[10] Therefore, a profound experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* is meant to lead to a fuller living of the *Constitutions*.

1. The 4th Week of the Exercises : The Resurrection of Christ our Lord ¹:

a. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a marvel and a manifestation of the Heavenly Father's Love. It is a creative act, enabling the Divine Son to sit at His right hand [cf. Ps 110:1]. The Risen One is thus glorified in a heavenly manner. The Father raised Jesus up from among the dead, and presents Him definitively and eschatologically to history as "the Lord of all creation." There is thus manifested in anticipation His glory in the Body of the Risen One to give Him back to humanity forever, and with all His gifts. The Holy Spirit, Who was already present from the beginning in His human life, now brings into history with His own dimension, making of it a new era: "**... This news is about the Son of God who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David. It is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead...**" cf. Rm 1:3-4].

b. This event, which is for the Crucified Jesus His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, places in evidence His divinity and the fullness of His life as God. The death of the Crucified in the past could not live any other manner than with the very life of the Father. Jesus is the Lord, equal to the Father, and there is seen in Him the fullness of the glory of the divinity, which is Love. It is precisely this love which handed Him over to death, and it is that same love which raises Him up again. He could not die forever - He is the last and definitive word of God to the history of humanity. His love and fidelity could not expire. It is in this that the Father manifests for us His very being as God in this unique identity of crucified love, raised up now in the Holy Spirit, to His condition as Lord, equal to God. The Father constitutes His Son as that definitive center which brings to perfection His work of creation, that awaited from the beginning the glorious manifestation of the Savior.

c. Different from the Incarnation and the Passion of Christ, the Resurrection served as a marvelous confirmation of faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ and in the redeeming significance of the sacrifice of the Cross. Enthroned at the right hand of God, He received the Holy Spirit from the Father, He Who had been promised and has now been sent [cf. Ac 2:33]. The Risen Son is now the *Kyrios*, the Christ [cf. Ac 2:56]. However, He continues likewise to remain as Jesus of Nazareth. There is, then, in the Person of the Risen One, a profound identity with the realization of His earthly life. Yet, there is also a break, or overcoming all limit through the pneumatological dimension. The return of the Risen Jesus does not mean the continuation of the broken thread of His earthly existence. **What is true now is that**

the Crucified lives by God and in the Spirit, and there is placed in Him in evidence the plenitude of the divinity, His condition as Lord.

d. For this reason, the Resurrection of Jesus is the most patent manifestation of God's love and fidelity in human history. The Resurrection represents not only God's decisive action, but also His eschatological self-revelation. In the resurrection, there is revealed in a definitive and insuperable manner just who God is: He is the One Whose power transcends both life and death, being and non-being, He is creative love and fidelity, the power of new life, the One in Whom all may confide in an unconditional manner, even when all their human possibilities have trickled away. The Resurrection of Jesus is the revelation and the realization of God's Reign announced by Jesus. In the Resurrection of Jesus from among the dead God has manifested His fidelity in love and identified definitively with Jesus and His cause. Jesus does not remain among the dead, but He lives. In this manner, there appears in him that definitive and ultimate significance of all things. With Him there have been inaugurated the eschatological happenings. He is the Lord of life and death, the first of all the risen.

e. On the part of the divine initiative, there exists the self-manifestation of His divine glory. However, in order for this to be an **eschatological** event in the Spirit, there is needed on the part of **Paschal Faith** that clear evidence of love, which makes possible that total abandonment into the hands of a God who disposes of possibilities far beyond that evident in the present reality, even beyond life and death. In the biblical text, those that do not "understand" this reality there is the implication that there is likewise a total lack of preparation for this event. This would imply a radical ignorance, the absence of interior communion, which would be necessary in order to grasp the object.

f. The Resurrection of Jesus for Jn's Gospel, is a mystery from 'on high' which humanity, the 'flesh', cannot know, nor grasp unless one is reborn of the Holy Spirit [cf. Jn 3:5]. The closeness of the Risen One, through which the Father's fidelity and love are made quite evident, now illumine the eyes of the heart to "see" the Lord. This is a faith that is not possessive, but quite humble and regulated by love that opens up pleasantly into human history toward an eschatological future with God, in the mystery of the Risen One [cf. Jn 29:17, ff.].

1.] In the Resurrection story, it has been noted that Mary Magdalene's attempt to "cling" to the Risen One is still a terrestrial faith, and such faith never contented Jesus. It was necessary for Mary - as it always is for the Church - to **live a renewed paschal faith**, renewed radically from on high. Mary's initial understanding was that Jesus' resurrection was simply Christ returning to all that was before: she held him fast, and did not want to let Him go [cf. Sgs 3:4].

2.] However, Jesus had not risen from the tomb merely to pick up again all that had been terminated with His death. He is now in **a totally new "condition"** [cf. 8:23], from above, now with all His being Mary's well-intentioned gesture does not correspond to this new reality of the Resurrection. She "allows"

Jesus to escape from her hands at the precise moment that He calls her by name. Her profession of **paschal faith**: “Jesus has risen!” no longer pretends to hold that Jesus has simply returned to His previous earthly condition, that He gave up as a redemptive oblation to the Father as he ex-spined on the Cross.

3.] From all this, the fervent believer is being called to base all of the rest of life on the mystery of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus - His life and death, His Resurrection and Ascension. This kind of decisive recognition can only be perceived departing from the activity of the Holy Spirit which is Love Itself which is communicated, and thus forces open the eyes of faith - as the travelers to Emmaus had their eyes “opened” in the breaking of the two-fold table of the Lord’s Word [cf. Lk 24:31, f.]. The believers come to see and believe through the understanding of God’s Word and **the perception of the Risen One in the Meal blessed by the Lord** - He, Who is here with us now, in the eternal presence of God.

g. What Ignatius learned from the Mystery of the Resurrection is that Jesus **LIVES**, and we are all being called to **a share in His “company”, to live in His “society.”** [cf. Lk 24:23; Ac 25:19]. At the very infusion of the Consolation of the Holy Spirit, at the showing of the Glory of the Lord’s divinity, human beings are “re-created from on high” in their Paschal Faith in the Risen Lord.

1.] The post-Resurrection encounters with Jesus are called **Christophanies** in the strongest sense of that term. In Jn’s language, this is an act of new revelation - new redemption. This is the decisive effect of the Lord “showing” Himself, His Stigmata, and His purpose was to redeem the doubts, transforming them into **Paschal Faith - a resurrection in its own right**. This active ‘showing’ in Jn is both Wisdom [Revelation] and Power [Redemption].

2.] In Lk, the gesture of showing His Wounds, **Stigmata**, in His hands and His feet seems to have for its scope that of dissipating the doubts regarding the reality of the appearance and of the real Body of the Risen Jesus. For Jn, the identity is that this Jesus who had been Crucified, is now the **Risen One** - the wounds in the hands, feet and side are proof of this. This is the Jesus, One and the Same. **This identity is essential in Jn’s theological perspective**. The Savior, is the Lord, and it is He whom the disciples have seen on that Easter Night. This is Jesus, Whose hands, feet and side were pierced and the eye witness say the blood and water pour forth [Jn 19] - and these are the witnesses for those coming to the Church, renewed paschal faith: the Spirit [the source of grace] - water [Baptism] and Blood [the Eucharist] [cf. I Jn 5:6]

3.] The experience of created grace [love and consolation] - opens up the eyes of faith so that disciples of all times might contemplate deeply the exaltation of the Risen One, and this is through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. It is precisely “the disciple whom Jesus had loved” [cf. Jn 20:2; 21:7] - who had leaned on the side of Christ at the Last Supper, who brings this in-depth experience of the One Whom he had seen and touched [cf. I Jn 1:1]. Thus in Paschal Faith, the resurrection of the Crucified is also meant to be the resurrection of the believers of all

time. This new creation is to a new life of faith, fidelity, justice and love for God and for one another.

4.] The Risen Lord comes back - again and again - to be with, to remain with, His followers in the Spirit. This is the whole learning of the apostolic way of life - intensifying in the Passion and Death, and culminating in the Resurrection and Ascension. For all believers now they are meant to **live this Paschal Faith**, from now on. They will live out the eschatological promises according to which God Himself will one day reach consummation - this is inaugurated on Easter Night by the Risen One: **“As the Father sent Me, I am now sending you!** “[cf. Jn 20:19, ff.]. Through Jn, we assist at the resurrection of any believer who will accept Paschal Faith, to the glory of the Risen Lord. The resurrection redeems faith.

h. The Object of this Experience of the Encounter with the Risen Lord: the Apostles, Ignatius, believers, all **meet the Risen Lord**, now in the two-fold Table of His Word. In His humanity, word, Eucharist, there is manifested His divinity, and the triumph of His exaltation.

1.] St. Thomas Aquinas ¹ notes that the disciples were still held back by their merely human, ‘carnal’ love for the humanity of Christ, and had not yet been elevated by that spiritual love to His, and therefore, they were not yet ready for the Holy Spirit. Again, the Angelic Doctor ¹ notes that the disciples still needed to be elevated, raised up with and through Jesus to the sphere of the Holy Spirit, from their merely human, carnal love, totally and exclusively still bound to their previous experience of sharing life with the terrestrial Jesus. **They needed to be raised to a spiritual love to the adoration of the divinity of the Crucified, now raised in glory, manifested in His Resurrection.**

2.] **Paschal Faith consists in being raised up in conversion**, to see how the totality of His Divine Person is an encounter with God is with Him, His being God continuously, definitively and forever, even though in a differing form and condition, the divine presence had set up His tent among human beings. This remains in His Word, in the Eucharist. The one who makes the *Exercises*, or strives to live the *Constitutions*, **begs often for the grace to perceive the Crucified as being present in human form, suffering and dying on the Cross, is still present here and now, “meta-historically”, beyond and above history, in His new form of life**, quite distinct and superior.

3.] The description of this new, risen condition of life is beyond human capability, and all human expression is totally inadequate, insufficient for this. Jesus lives and is present here among His ‘Company’, His ‘Society’. To the one raised up on the Cross, and handing His Spirit over to Him in His ultimate ex-spriation of His Spirit, the Son raised on the Cross has been given the power to “draw” all to Himself [cf. Jn 12:32]. In dying, He handed Himself over in loving obedience to the love of the Father in carrying out His will. The Father has accepted this eminently pleasing oblation of the divine Son. This Father has bestowed on Him His own

eternal exaltation as “Lord”, in the eschatological fulfillment of all Creation, lived now liturgically in the Church, especially in the Eucharist.

4.] **The Father has manifested to us all, through the Risen Jesus, His definitive and eternal love.** He asks of the fervently believing Church to fall down in **adoration** [cf. Mk 28:17; Lk 24:52] of the divinity in complete triumph of Crucified Love. He is due **joy, veneration and apostolic service** - this is the purpose of this joyful and consoling Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, also for those who would live his *Constitutions*. **The apostolic mission is centered on the sharing of this Good News, through any form of the Word of God whatsoever.** [cf. *Formula S.J.* initium].

i. Thus in the mind of St. Ignatius, the New Creation of the Holy Spirit is reflected now in human beings through the powerful gift of consolation. Joy needs to be expressed in the triumph of the Risen Lord over sin and death, and in the total Self-giving of His life, His Self-lessness. In imitation of this, there is more joy in the triumph, well-being, success of another. The success of others can be the cause of real joy, and also bring about a more intense love for others. Not to us, O Lord, not to us - but to Your Name let there be glory! [cf. Ps 115:1]. This joy and happiness in the Lord’s triumph has as its purpose to work in the conversion of the way-farer: out of this experience of the encounter with the Risen Lord there springs the firm desire of living the new life of Grace, in the Spirit. This rejoicing inspires one to be the more dedicated to the Apostolic Mission.

j. Therefore, the Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* is meant to assist in the ultimate purification which leads the believer to **a life of crucified joy.** This finds its foundation in the Glory of God. The Father, in His love, has pronounced the definitive Word of fidelity which consoles and fills the believer with Hope. All this returns to the Father in and through His Paternal Spirit, which Jesus has communicated through His presence, Resurrection and Ascension - this leads to Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit. In the glory of the manifestation of the Risen Lord, as Son of God, He sends another Paraclete, the Spirit - there dawns the era of the Church, the time of Joy and Hope. Each human being can become **a New Creation, being regenerated into new life in the Resurrection.**

k. The definitive vocation of the Christian is not death, but the Joy of the Resurrection of the Lord, the recognition of the divinity **through the glorious body of Jesus, in the manifestation of His Wounds [cf. Jn 20]**. Jesus, as God’s only begotten, most beloved Son, establishes the New Creation. This is a new relationship of that same love that unites Jesus with His Father, through the Holy Spirit. This *agape*’ is communicated, shared with the baptized, the consecrated into Christ Jesus - in the form of love and fidelity in the Risen Christ. All of the believers are being called to become more and more children of the most High, **sharing in Jesus’ own Filiation, by participation in the glorious life of the Risen Lord.** This is kept alive through the Contemplation toward Love.

2. The Structure of Ignatius' Text:

a. The very brief document of the Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, as this results from the pen of St. Ignatius, is composed of three basic elements, and their sub-divisions:

- the **appearance** of the Risen Lord to Our Lady [cf. SE, ## 218-220];
- **three considerations that guide the contemplation:**

- the petition for **the grace of the Fourth Week** [cf. SE #221];
- the divine **showing** of His Divinity [SE # 224];
- the office of "**Consoler**" Who permeates the Risen One [SE # 224].

- the four "**Notes**" which really, of their nature, pertain to the interior and practical running of the *Spiritual Exercises* - but, these offer fruit from any careful reflecting upon them.

b. From this "structure" the student may note those basic points, that fundamental orbit, within which the contemplation of the retreatant should gravitate. This appearance to Our Lady fulfills a paradigmatic function. Then, the complementarity of the three considerations [cf. SE ## 221; 223;224] guide and center the attention of the very ultimate meaning of the Resurrection in the life of the Church. These few elements are those which offer the key of Ignatius; own understanding of **this Encounter with the Crucified, Who is now Risen**. The Contemplation toward Love leads to **a hope-filled APOSTOLIC MISSION**.

1.] **The Appearance of the Risen Lord to Our Lady [cf. SE ## 218-225; 299].**

a.] For this non-biblical scene with all probability St. Ignatius had as his source *The Life of Christ*, by Ludolf of Saxony, '**the Carthusian**', who speaks of just such an apparition. For both writers, Jesus' appearance after His Resurrection to His Mother is the very first such encounter for Him, and both treat of it in the same way, in 'explaining away' the silence of the Scriptures in this regard.

[1] "**The Carthusian**" explains the appearance and the reason for Scripture's silence as follows: He appeared to her at the very outset of His glory. Jesus Christ came to her, her most beloved Son, dressed in the brilliant white of His glorious refulgence. This vesture represented the habit of the lasting glory and the dignity of His new Resurrection. And then that King of kings conducted the report on how He had gone down to the nether-world and how He had emptied that infernal prison of those faithful ones who had awaited Him.

[2] With just such an admirable appearance, the Prince of Glory, it is piously believed, came to the glorious Virgin. Nothing about this is recorded in the holy Gospel, but it is believed that He conducted this as the first of

His appearances. It is simply basic piety that it should have been thus. This seems implied in the readings of the subsequent appearances of the Risen One.

[3] It is simply a very noble reality that the Redeemer of the World should have visited His own Mother before coming to anyone else, and before anyone else would have been able to rejoice in His Resurrection. And even though this maternal appreciation was hidden from the Evangelists, with all firm piety it is believed and held for certain in the entire universal Church, according to Ludolf.

[4] There is nothing unusual about the fact that not one of the Evangelists has written anything about this appearance to Mary, because as St. John himself has stated, not everything about the life of the most holy Redeemer has been recorded. However, we can say that this most holy appearance would have taken place because his whole purpose in writing the 4th gospel was to note the witnesses of Jesus' Resurrection. It would simply not have been fitting to draw the Mother into this with other witnesses, simply to prove the glory of her Son. He left this appearance in the realm of the mystery in which it occurred. Nothing is present in the Scriptures that is without purpose. And there would be no need to mention this appearance which would have been evident in itself. He simply appeared to His Mother as her Risen Son, to bring joy to her heart through the vision of this Encounter.

b.] Because of his references to her, St. Ignatius places this first of all in his presentation of the Resurrected Christ. It stands to reason that for the Jesuit Founder this appearance would have been of primordial importance. He made use of none of the apocryphal sources, but simply placed this appearance to Mary as something self-evident, necessary and fundamental of all that will follow.

c.] Regarding the space accorded to this appearance of the Risen Son to His Blessed other, there are two observations to be made:

- in the first place, the appearance to Mary occupies and recurs in the Ignatian text as ending that 'Paschal Hiatus' [between the Burial and His appearance], up until that moment in which the divinity of her Risen Son would appear to her as the principle of all life;

- secondly, this appearance is included in the Preamble of the Fourth Week and becomes its fundamental hinge. This logically is the point that will lead to the structuring of the rest of the contemplations which will take place as the Fourth week progresses.

[1] It needs to be noted that the "Paschal Hiatus" evident in Ignatius' works depends upon this. in the **SE # 208**, St. Ignatius describes the "Sixth Day" of the Passion: At midnight, from the taking down from the cross to the burial exclusive [SE # 298], and in the morning of the burial inclusive to the house to which our Lady retired after the burial of her Son."

[2] Throughout Holy Saturday, Our Lady spent this in solitude. The "Composition of Place" as part of the Ignatian spirit of prayer offers for

the contemplation of the Resurrection an imagination of the disposition of the sepulcher, and the house of the Blessed Virgin. When the Blessed Mother returned to the sepulcher and there Christ appeared to her.

[3] In the presence of the Sorrowful Mother, the Sacred Body was taken down off the Cross and placed in the monument. Then, Mary went home. Mary's suffering is also that of the disciples of all times.

d.] Throughout Tradition Mary is more than merely her physical person. She possesses a unique theological charge as Mother of Jesus. She fulfills a role in the History of Salvation which opened itself up more and more for St. Ignatius.

[1] In the *Spiritual Exercises*, as well as in his life, Mary seems to appear in the crucial moments of his spiritual experiences:

- she is present in the three-fold colloquy of the First Week [SE # 63];
- she is present for the Incarnation [SE ## 103, 107-108] and the Birth of Jesus ;
- she is mentioned in the colloquy of the Two Standards [SE # 147];
- in the farewell to His Mother at the beginning of His Mission [SE # 273, 1];
- in the moment of the resurrection, Jesus chooses to make His first appearance to His own Mother.

[2] In the unfolding of his *Life*, she is present at the moment of his conversion [Autob., c. 1, n. 10]. He experiences her mediation at LaStorta when he goes there to be placed by the Father with His Son [c. 10, n. 96]. These are data that leave beyond any doubt her primordial function in his life. She plays a role in her mediating access to the Trinity as well as in the process of identification with Jesus with a view to sharing His Mission.

e.] She is present for the duration of Holy Saturday and in the passing over from death to life of the Risen Lord, as noted in the text of the *Exercises* - hence, she plays a role beyond compare. Her person is charged with a **symbolic value, in her intimate bond with the figure of the Church**. The Church is also chosen to be blessed by the appearances of the Risen Lord and Mary serves the Church with regard to all the appearances that He has made.

f.] Ignatius presents Jesus' descent into 'Sheol', where He sets free the souls of the just -then comes to the sepulcher, and rising, appears in body and soul to His Blessed Mother [cf. SE # 219].

[1] There is a note in **St. Gregory the Great's Commentary in Job [Bk 29, c. 12, n. 23]** to the effect that the Lord not only descended into this world, but He also descended into the nether world for us. Christ, in descending, spontaneously went to the depths of the sea when He placed himself into the abyss of the under-ground. He went there to empty the souls of the elect from their confinement. Prior to the arrival of the Redeemer, these depths under the

sea were a prison, not a pathway. But, God **converted the abyss into a highway**, because He granted to His chosen the possibility to pass over to heaven from their imprisonment. This then, became the most new of the abysses, because in that our sight cannot plummet the depths of the sea, in the same way, there is no human intelligence which can penetrate the depths of the under-world.

[2] In much of the Eastern Church, the image of Redemption is that **Icon of the descent of Christ** into the under-world. He springs open those doors that had been perpetually closed. God died in the flesh, and was enveloped in the underworld. God had slept for a little while and had summoned forth from their sleep those who were living there. [Von Balthasar, "The Going to the Realm of the Dead", in *Mysterium Paschale*]

[3] **The fact that Christ descended into Sheol signifies for modern theology that he shared human death even to its ultimate consequences of dissolution, anguish, distance from God and total emptiness. In similar manner to Him being really alone among the living, He is now in solidarity in His tomb with the dead. The solidarity with the state of the dead will then be the presupposition for the work of Redemption, whose efficacy is prolonged even to the reign of the dead. Christ descended in to the land of forgetfulness to announce there in a kerygmatic manner His salvation, transforming the deepest part of the abyss into a purifying transition and pathway to salvation. In this manner God has illumined the death of those for whom nothing had any more meaning - they were in the emptiness and the ignorance of 'Sheol.'**

[4] It is from these 'depths' that Jesus passes over into the House of Mary, as the Risen One, in body and soul, to appear to His Blessed Mother. And this encounter is the beginning of the understanding of Sacred Scripture. This is the beginning of the Easter Consolation, in which there is most evident the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

g.] In handling his materials Ignatius has us look to see if in this description of this first apparition to His Blessed Mother, we find ourselves before the most profound reality of His Mystery. Christ thus comes to His Church, in the Spirit, and has chosen to remain there forever.

[1] **The Symbol of Mary and the Understanding of the Faith.**

[a] The encounter of the Risen Lord with Mary is the moment in which, according to St. Ignatius, the Holy Spirit makes known and interprets the entire reality in the light of Scripture and Revelation: "... He appeared to the Virgin Mary. Though this is not mentioned explicitly in the Scripture, it must be considered as stated when Scripture says that He appeared to many others. For Scripture supposes that we have understanding, as it is written: 'Are you also without understanding?' [cf. Mk 7:18; 8:21 Mt 15:16; **SE # 299**].

[b] The Holy Spirit is the **Interior ‘Agent’** Who gives origin to **the ‘recognition’ of the Risen One** and in His turn, He bestows the “Gift”. This Gift of the Spirit is the **perfect Spiritual Understanding**. The Holy Spirit is the One Who reminds the Church, brings to the mind of believers, the disciples, all that Jesus has said to them and that He is now leading to the full Truth [cf. Jn 16:12-13].

{1} This “Truth” is variously interpreted:

- St. Irenaeus: this Truth is the Doctrine of Jesus Christ;
- DV 24: this is all Truth based on the Mystery which is Jesus;
- I. delaPotterie, S.J.: believes that Jn identifies ‘Truth’ principally with Christ the Revealer, with the **Light** of Jesus, with the **Revelation** of the mystery of His Filiation. The scholar insists, however, that each believer is called to live this truth in the depths of each one’s being. The ‘Truth’ is the Word of God, Divine Revelation, which has been communicated to us in Jesus Christ and which has been communicated to us as **the norm of practical living**. Jesus is presented as the witness, *par excellence*, of the messianic Revelation. This Truth is Jesus Himself - the witness that one must bring to Him is in making known to human beings the Mystery of His Person and Mission, by one’s own conviction, and by one’s dedication to the apostolic mission of the Church.

{2} For this reason, the one making the *Spiritual Exercises*, on arriving at the Fourth Week has to ask for this **new understanding** of the reality, in accord with the Scriptures, which can only be perceived, and all this in one place: in holy communion with the Church, **the True Spouse of Jesus Christ, ruled and governed by the Holy Spirit** [cf. **SE ## 253; 365**]. The symbolic image of the Encounter of the Risen Lord with His Mother is the source, beginning with which there is shared this Gift. This is the underlying purpose of the Encounter of the Risen Lord with His Blessed Mother.

[c] In the Appearance of the Risen Lord to Mary, she is the **figure of the spiritual and prophetic tradition of the Church**, from the very beginning of the spiritual understanding of the **glorious** humanity of the Word of God - all the way through to the penetration into His mystery by work of the Holy Spirit. The Sacred Scripture, on its part, is the foundation and the guarantee that **this collective tradition and its spiritual understanding**, are bound indissolubly to the appearance of the Word of God to His Mother.

[d] Mary teaches all how to accept the Risen Christ in and through faith, without the multiplicity of proofs, nor of signs. She educates us, accustoms us, makes it habitual for us, through her faith, to grasp this presence of the Risen Lord in daily life. The one making the *Spiritual Exercises* as well as the one living perpetually the *Constitutions*, must place himself **alongside Mary - who is with her Risen Son**, in order to receive Him precisely as He appeared to her, **in His Risen Glory**. With our Lady one passes over from desolation, loneliness, to consolation. The person who unites with Mary experiences

this presence of the Risen Lord in life. The saint has us enter into such experiential understanding in freedom and fidelity. Only an understanding of lived and hopeful faith can lead one to serve the Church for a lifetime.

[e] In the light of the resurrection of her Son, Mary inaugurates the new type of **understanding** the faith which will be the patrimony of the nascent Church. In the moment of the glory of the resurrection, Mary is one with the Church [cf. Ac 1:12-14] - which Jesus Christ has entrusted to His Apostles. In her one can become united in a unique manner to the Paschal Mystery, and in this way the faith in the Church is generated and communicated.

[f] The understanding of the **Scriptures**, the Gift of the **Spirit**, and **Mary**: these are three realities that are intimately interwoven throughout the unfolding of that Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius begins to contemplate from this very composition of the initial place which consists in the passing over from the disposition of the sepulcher to the House of Our Lady [cf. SE # 220]. Concerning this coming to the "House of Mary", a figure of the Church, the spiritual understanding of the Scripture is the Gift of the Spirit which the Church receives in the moment in which the Risen One, her Son, meets with Mary.

[2] Ignatius' Conversion through the Risen Lord to Total Commitment to the Apostolic Mission of the Church:

[a] For this reason, there can be little surprise in accepting the person of Mary as symbolically the culmination of the entire spiritual process. In similar manner, as for the Grand Journey of Jesus, ever towards Jerusalem, St. Ignatius follows this step by step, noting the historical Jesus all the way up to the moment of His death on the Cross. Jesus is followed right through to Jerusalem.

[b] However, at a given moment of Ignatius' life, Rome comes to occupy for him the end of his own pilgrimage. Rome for him is definitively the New Jerusalem, whence he looks upon the faith of Mary received in the Spirit in her Risen Son, and she then becomes the exemplary Model of the Faith of the Church obedient to God.

[c] From the reception of the Word and by the fulfillment of the salvific will of God, the Church is born, **the Spouse of Christ**, constituted in conformity with the Gift of the Holy Spirit, by the ecclesial communion, **for the apostolic mission**. With the appearance of the Risen Lord to Mary we find ourselves consequently before the theological foundation of the specific discernment of the Fourth Week: **to consider the Church as the Spouse of Christ, led by the Spirit of God beginning with the moment of the Ascension.** [cf. Ac 1:4].

[3] The Ascension and Ignatius' Conversion to the Apostolic Mission:

[a] For Ignatius, the Lord's Ascension was connected closely to his own desire for the Holy Places. His idea was to imitate even materially Jesus Christ even in the minimal details, and to consider these simply as elements on his way of his following of Christ - the horizon of which was still in the Plan of God. He was making the leap from the 'particular' place, the Holy City of Jerusalem - to the Spiritual Jerusalem, the Universal Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

[b] The Ascension meant for him that final point of the Fourth Week. This opened up, through the Contemplation toward Love, to the daily monotony and routine of the living of the *Constitutions*, using as his horizon his life in and for the Church. This meant the disappearance of the visible Jesus of Nazareth Who gave the beginnings of the **Apostolic Mission**, beginning with the apostolate in an around the *Gesù* in Rome. This all began and was inspired by the experience of the Risen Lord present to all, in the Gift of the Holy Spirit - in every single historical moment of life in the ecclesial service.

[c] In this perspective, St. Ignatius made use of the text of St. Luke's Ascension [cf. Ac 1:3-4; Lk 24:50; Ac 1:9-11]. Ignatius personally would have to leave the *Exercises*, and get back to the daily living of the *Constitutions*. Jesus goes up in a cloud - **the Apostolic Missionaries cannot stand there all the day idle.** Jesus' divinity is proclaimed - He leaves the Church His Spirit, and daily life must get on. Much like earlier, Ignatius had been obliged by God's will to give up the Holy Places of Palestine and Jerusalem.

[d] The Ascension broadened the concept of the Appearance in order to make it coincide with the redeeming act the efficacy of which is no universal. The retreatant is inspired by the Call from his Creator and Redeemer [cf. SE # 229, 4]. He is now to be committed to the **apostolic mission** for the good of souls. This is the culmination of this new manner of living the new dimension of the life of Jesus in the Spirit, and Ignatius undertakes the Roman stage in his journey - as happens in the Acts of the Apostles. The conducting motif in this entire process is the Gift of Pentecost, described in the Contemplation meant to increase Love for God and love for the Apostolic Mission.

[e] The mysteries have to be chosen to be contemplated, in service of the spiritual situation of anyone making the *Exercises*. each part needs to be considered in itself as a unity, though, in the backdrop of each one's personal experience Underneath it all is the Christological perspective and the intention to serve the father as He did - and to serve Him as the Apostles did.

[3] The Gift of the Spirit - and the Spirit's Gift of Joy

[a] In this connection, the Saint often speaks of the Gift of the Spirit, as "Joy":

- “Here it will be to ask for the grace to be glad and rejoice intensely for the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord” [cf. SE # 221].
- ...then to strive to feel joy and happiness at the great joy and happiness of Christ our Lord.” [cf. SE # 229].
- [Under his Rules for Discernment of Spirits, the Saint writes]: It is characteristic of God and His Angels when they act upon the soul, to give genuine true happiness and spiritual joy, and to banish all sadness and disturbances which are caused by the enemy” [cf. SE # 329].

[b] His use of the word, and a variety of synonyms, refers to that phenomenon that results from consolation, or the spiritual experience of the Resurrection. Such joy is lacking in self-interest, because it is based on that “experience” resulting from contemplation, study, and heeding the Magisterium [cf. DV 8] in the praying of God’s Word. This is the same as the pure joy of love that is happy in good that comes to someone else, or has a special access to the goods of salvation. Only God and His life can satisfy the deepest yearnings of the human heart. From this, springs the “**obedience of faith**” [cf. DV 5: including hope and charity] - this is the open faith that is enabled to recognize the Risen Lord present in all the events of life. [cf. St. Thomas Aquinas: **III, q. 55, a. 2, ad 1 um**]: they saw with their own eyes the One Whom they knew to have been dead, is living after the resurrection ...’]

[c] To consider the Divinity with the gesture of **adoration**, to ponder the unfolding of His activity as the Risen One, in His **relationships** with the constellation of persons He encounters, this recalls to mind also the remaining human dimension of His Divinity. The response of one who has made the *Spiritual Exercises*, and then has chosen to live the *Constitutions*, is meant to be one of **the obedience of faith in joy**. There is here the triumph of the Resurrection which clings to God as the foundation of all Hope. Faith, from now on, is considered an encounter, and it is one that opens up in the life of grace to the eschatological future of God.

[d] St. Ignatius uses the word “joy” in two senses:

- objectively, as the equivalent of the glory or the triumph of Jesus Christ - this is the origin of the second, which is:
 - and as the subjective experience which inspires into a believer the activity of the Spirit of God. This is the lack of self-interest in one’s corresponding love to God. This is a human sharing in the triumph and in the life of the Risen Lord - and this **joy always culminates in sharing in the same apostolic mission Jesus received from His Father.**

[e] For St. Ignatius, the consolation which in this last stage of Week Four ought to be prayed for by the one making the *Spiritual Exercises*, and then perpetuated by the one living the *Constitutions*. It is meant to be the real, ‘objective experience’, both profound and intense, of the religious and priest. The source of this experience is the real presence of the Risen Lord through

the theological life. **The presence of the Crucified who has risen becomes the source of the Apostolic Mission** - He lives and manifests Himself as the fullness of God. It is His Mercy which reconciles human beings among themselves and with God. The fervent believer thus is open to the reception of the Spirit of the Risen Lord.

[f] And this is why St. Ignatius retains the two most genuine aspects of this experience:

- the miraculous manifestation of the fullness of the Divinity: "Fourth Point: This will be to consider the divinity, which seemed to hide itself during the Passion, now appearing and manifesting itself so miraculously in the most holy resurrection in its true and most sacred effects." [cf. SE # 223].

- the friendly challenge to console the people of God: "Fifth Point. Consider the office of Consoler that Christ our Lord exercises, and compare it with the way in which friends are wont to console each other [cf. SE # 224].

|1| **Immediate Experience of the Divinity:**

|a| That joy proper to the Resurrection is a Gift of the Holy Spirit. And to remain consoled, as an intense experience, is analogous in its kind, but is qualitatively different from **the Paschal Experiences of those first witnesses in the Gospels and Acts**. The source of their joy was nothing other than the objective fact of the Resurrection of the Lord, and the repercussion of this divine event for the history of humanity.

|b| In this ambiance of mystery St. Ignatius recommends that the one making the ***Spiritual Exercises*** - and in some cases then making a life of this by following the ***Constitutions*** - needs, first of all, to go through the Theology of the Cross. The intensity of pondering this aspect of the Paschal Mystery needs that depth of faith-perception of the miraculous manifestation of the divinity in itself. This perception needs to be continued in the theological life through its genuine and most holy effects.

|c| These effects redound directly from the origin of the motion. They are derived from the manifestation of the triumph and from the glory of the Risen Lord Himself - they derive from the experience of His glory and identity, through faith, hope and love. It is from this experience that joy is born, rejoicing and peace - that stability in the fidelity of God the Father and His love. In this manner, the fervent apostolic missionary places himself in the footsteps of Jesus, along the way of the Cross. The Father has glorified His Crucified Son, confirming in this manner His historical process of the Incarnation. By this, all the way through His death and Resurrection, more and more He makes Himself 'experienced', each time more openly, and all this in the fullness of the mystery of the Trinity.

|2| **The Office of Consoler**

|a| For Ignatius, the Apostolic Mission is also **the duty "of consoling" the Lord's people**, speaking to their hearts! [cf. Is 40:1, ff.]. "To be consoled" for the Jesuit Founder meant **to meet personally with**

the Risen Lord. Each Apostolic Missionary is sent so that others may likewise personally and intensely experience the Risen Lord's triumph and identity, which was the whole purpose of His coming and His Mission. This open confirmation, on the part of the Father, of this Risen Son and now Lord, happened through His arduous life-long journey of abasement and final exaltation. This life-long Way of the Cross gave access to the fullness of the divinity. All who would follow Him are challenged to take up the Cross - and they are guaranteed by that same fidelity of God the Father and His love, which inspired His most beloved Son. This means that all are invited to participate in His Resurrection and to find their highest hopes confirmed, and all this unfolds within the sphere of the Paternal Spirit of God.

|b| His office of Consoler consists precisely in conceding that Spirit which proceeds in a more principal manner from the Father. In the place of naming the Spirit specifically, he alludes indirectly to Him by referring to His effects, His personal gifts, which are both authentic and most holy, that flow from the Resurrection of the Divine Son, after ex-spiring His Spirit. These gifts are admiration, joy, happiness, which those first witnesses experienced when they saw the Risen Lord [cf. Lk 24:32, 41, 52]. These gifts are the new space of freedom created by the Spirit of God [cf. 2 Co 3:17]. "To console", then for St. Ignatius, means to work that the Spirit come to the hearts and minds of God's people. The abundant out-pouring of the Holy Spirit diffuses everywhere in the fullness of these final times.

|c| The Risen Christ of the Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* expressly introduces to the exercitant the contemplation of these other special dimensions of the divine activity. These are all presented under the category of the form and global experience of the Holy Spirit of God. His proposal is: "...as soon as I awake, to place before my mind the contemplation I am to enter upon, and then to strive to feel joy and happiness at the great joy and happiness of Christ Our Lord." [cf. SE # 229]. Through the experience of these special gifts of the Holy Spirit, we enter into contact, in the natural form with the living reality of the Holy Spirit which is found present in an active manner from the first undertaking of the spiritual process, bringing together the life of Jesus Christ, and that of the one making the *Spiritual Exercises*, who then is called to live that life through the *Constitutions in serving in the Apostolic Mission*. However, in this Fourth Week, this special presence becomes more and more evident, because the believer and apostolic missionary enters more and more into contact with that very "font". It is from Him that flows the manifestation of the Divinity in the glorious body of the Risen Lord.

|d| The Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* supposes in this sense a real advance in the Trinitarian and Pneumatological development, precisely around the concept of the authentic joy of Paschal Consolation [the Holy Spirit in Person], which is immediately derived from the Risen Lord. The reason is that the effects of this, which are authentic motions of salvation, are found immediately related to the Person of the paternal Holy Spirit Whom Christ gives us. It is through him which enables the believer to pass from the "spiritual" to the very life of the Spirit. And since this Holy Spirit communicates to His

very own Spirit, and in part this consists in authentic joy, proper to the Resurrection - and then, on the other hand, a share in the filial communion of Jesus with the Father through love.

[3] The Response: Life in the Spirit:

[a] Ignatius' **Suscipe** - A Trinitarian
Prayer: "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To You, O Lord, I return it. All is Yours, dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is sufficient for me." [cf. SE # 234 d].

[1] There is some surprise for commentators when they note Ignatius' pre-ordination of his freedom, with respect to the three potencies of the soul: memory, understanding, will. This oblation is the reflection of the double reciprocal movement which defines love. The Lord, Who has made of me the object of His election, now seeks to receive me in the intimacy of His life.

[2] This is a matter of handing over that objective dominion upon which my freedom holds sway and the union of this with God - And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son Himself will be the subject in His turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all [cf. 1 Co 15:28]. St. Ignatius does this not so much out of any duty, but simply out of love. The Lord has given him all, and thus he returns it with a reciprocity which includes all, that God is all in all.

[3] This prayer of the **Suscipe** is that expression of St. Ignatius' life: this is his "existential theology", the root, the synthesis of all the rest that he tried to do. He hands over his memory, his understanding, and his entire will. This image of the Trinity is to respond to the very life of God Father, son and Holy Spirit: intellect, will, memory. On the soul is taken over with such love of self-giving it is raised up by the spirit of God and by His grace and placed into contact, according to the three potencies of the soul with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[4] **St. Gaspar Bertoni, on May 24, 1810**¹ presents in his Spiritual Diary, a prayer of the deMontfort spirit, in honor of Mary, but close, as well, to this spirit of St. Ignatius: **"I greet you, o my Mother, give me your blessing, bless me and all who are dear to me. Please offer to God all have to do and suffer today, in union with your merits, as well as those of your Blessed son. I offer you and consecrate to your service, all my being, and whatever belongs to me placing everything under your protection. Obtain for me, my dear Lady, purity of soul and body and grant that I may not do anything today displeasing to God. I entreat you through your Immaculate Conception and your perfect Virginity."**

[b] Love consists in communication on various levels; a likeness in nature, and a wishing the other well. Reciprocity is the

indication of the quality of the human sentiments and the measure of love. If appreciation is the bond that brings together those of unequal status, the Love, in exchange, that proceeding from God, brings the parties to some level of equality in order to reach out to one another in giving and receiving, in all its plenitude. In this we know that we remain in Him and that He remains in us, because He has given us His Spirit [cf. 1 Jn 4:13]. The love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us [cf. Rm 5:5]. In this way, all graces return with interest to the source of their Origin, from whence they flowed out in the mutual exchange of love. The Spirit impresses within the believer, by means of the Indwelling of the Most Blessed Trinity, that divine likeness in Whose image we have been formed.

|c| However, the formal motive in this case, is based always in the divine initiative which previously communicates a share in God's own nature, coupled with the receptivity in the human heart, experiencing this enormous love for itself. In this sense, the Divine Indwelling is a **"real"** presence, to which the fervent believer responds **"psychologically"**, in prayer, in the keeping of the commandments, in **commitment to the Apostolic Mission**. The human response, then, is translated in the generous handing over of oneself which incorporates all one's freedom in the service of the One Who loves us. The 'core' of love is to respond in a 'disinterested' manner, that is, unselfishly, in this plan of equality, being raised up from the Image and Likeness of God at creation, to the communication of the New Creation, in receiving the form of Christ. And thus, to hold oneself back, even just a little from this divine Totality, would be equivalent to evaluating that human attachment to other than God even more than the love of mutual communion, or would alienate us somewhat from God. On the contrary, anyone who would commit himself without reserve to this grace, and would commit himself to the Apostolic Mission, one who would consume himself in the service of God and neighbor - this is the concrete pathway of an endless process that leads to the return of all gifts, without any reservation, and with interest to God. Everything is in common for those who love one another: **"... Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To You, O lord, I return it..."** [cf. **SE # 234**].

|d| **This is the heart of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius - what he codifies in his *Constitutions*.** This is the very center of **"Ignatian Spirituality."** St. Ignatius himself offers us the best explanation of this marvelous "system", "school", in the *Constitutions*. It might be summarized in this Constitution: "...All should make diligent efforts to keep their intention right, not only in regard to their state of life, but also in all particular details. In these they should always aim at serving and pleasing the Divine Goodness for its own sake and because of the incomparable love and benefits with which God has anticipated us, rather than for fear of punishments or hope of rewards, although they ought to draw help also from them. Further, they should often be exhorted to seek God our Lord in all things, stripping off from themselves the love of creatures to the extent that this is possible, in order to turn their love upon the Creator of them, by loving Him in all creatures and all of them in him, in conformity with His holy and divine will..."

|e| The right intention is a freedom ordained in its total selflessness evident in authentic love. Of this, freedom has to be the root and the synthesis of all the rest that is offered and handed over. In this total unconditional giving of self one notes the central source in freedom, a synthesis of **the three potencies within the soul, the created image of the most Blessed Trinity**, so that His divine Majesty might make disposition completely in full harmony with each one's free availability. **This total handing of oneself over**, in Ignatius' mind, is the equivalent of the founding response of one giving himself over totally to God. These needs to continue, intensify regarding one's detachment from this world and all its goods, while precisely one is committed to the Apostolic Mission in the heart of the history and the world.

|f| Only love is capable of finding God in all matters, because He alone knows full well the delicacy and the immediacy that the Spirit works in this descent, even to the depths of **self-giving** in the history of creation. To descend with Him in this manner, to submit oneself even to the extreme of purification through the process of selflessness, to leave aside anything that would interfere in this path, and to latch on to anything and everything to **make an oblation of self**. This is done purely and simply to serve and to please His divine Goodness, to leave aside all else - even many blessings found in the redeemed world, one becomes 'transparent' for God, and returns His love with that of the fervent believer. In this cooperation with the workings of grace, one is raised up, in some way 'equaled' through love, to the very being of God.

|g| This Ignatian Formula: **to love and to serve God in all things**, is the goal toward which the entire course of the *Spiritual Exercises* tends - and which the *Constitutions* then codify for one's entire life of **service**. This is the authentic orientation which springs from the Holy Spirit of God as a Gift. The experience of **unconditional adherence to God** culminates in **service toward God**, and **the apostolic mission** in behalf of the Church. This is assumed by cooperation with the work of God in the world. Cooperation in the redemption of humanity asks of each one to become transparent in this service of God - and when one is, this enables the apostolic missionary more and more to make God transparent in the world. Love has that unique capacity of transforming all into something splendid, wonderful for God, even though some of these realities, in human eyes, might appear desperately irrecoverable, useless, harmful - such as would be suffering and death itself. For the persevering apostolic missionary in the service of God and the Church all needs to become transparent - this is what communicates the very visage of God.

|h| That contemplation for the increase of love is, in the end, that exercise directly orientated toward the profound, total and definitive ordination of our love for God in the same relationship that a human being establishes necessarily in response to the Spirit. For one to come to the conviction that only His love and His grace suffice, he must be orientated with all his affection to creatures in order to place them in the sphere of the Creator of all.

[4] The Holy Spirit: The Gift from the Risen

Lord:

|a| The expressions that St. Ignatius uses to refer to God in this contemplation are clear and unmistakable: ‘God our Lord’ - “His Divine Majesty” are expressions that are clearly Trinitarian, and they refer to God precisely as God, One and Three. Hence, any reductionist interpretation would be a narrowing of this Pneumatological experience with which the Saint was blessed, and in it there is contemplated the fullness of the activity of the Spirit within us.

|b| In this experience the **Father** is present. He comes out from Himself in the Creation and also in the Incarnation, **in handing over His Son**. He manifests in this way **His unconditional love** for humanity. However, there is likewise especially present **the Holy Spirit** Whom St. Ignatius mentions more than once at the end of his Book: [cf. **sentire cum Ecclesia**] “... For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the bridegroom, and in His Spouse, the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord who gave the Ten Commandments that our Holy Mother Church is ruled and governed...” [cf. SE # 365, 13]. The Saint silences the expressed presence of the Holy Spirit, omitting the contemplation of Pentecost. There appears, instead, precisely described through the use of the formula “**in**”, to present the bond of communion of God with the believer, and for the Epiphany of Love. St. Ignatius spoke of the Holy Spirit, without naming Him, above all in the Rules of Discernment [cf. SE ## 316, 330 - where he speaks of “Uncreated Grace”] - and now again in this Contemplation for Love, again as “Uncreated Grace”. The Holy Spirit dwells within the Apostolic Missionary as a **presence**, as a **power**, in anyone who works to carry on the same mission of Jesus Christ received from the Father.

|c| Poured out into the heart of the believer [cf. Rm 5:5], He brings it about that creation itself is a manifestation and experience of love, so that **in Him** everything goes back once more to God through freedom. And finally, this is the **Pneumatological Presence of the Risen One** to Whom all of creation is ordered as toward its purpose, goal. All has to be one day **re-capitulated** in Jesus Christ, as a universal passing over, for the glory of God the Father. **The God-Love has manifested Himself in the definitive form as Father, son and Holy Spirit.**

|d| God the Father **hands over** to us His Risen Son, and with Him gives to us the Holy Spirit of Love, through whom we receive all the gifts. All this happens in this microcosm which is that act of freedom affected by a Love that is received in a most gratuitous form. **Only He is capable of bringing about the New Creation, to the Image and Likeness of His Son, through the availability of His Love.**

|e| This Contemplation toward Love is an exercise that needs to go on and on, without any limited horarium, nor set for some determined day. This must be proposed for the consideration of the one who has made the *Spiritual Exercises* and who now lives the *Constitutions* permanently as

an Apostolic Missionary. This is proposed in the Fourth Week, after one has gone through the entire program of the *Spiritual Exercises*. This Trinitarian love is lived as **Friendship, Companionship**. When one has been led through the Scriptures, the Eucharist, to taste the ineffable experience of the Resurrection of the Lord and to God, His Father, as the indefectible fidelity, which His Love is This Love and Fidelity provoke a **Life of Holy Abandonment** of trust in God, and one of **total confidence in His hands**. One this is **abandoned to God, and totally available to the Church**.

|f|

The **New Creation** is life in Jesus Christ - this is not the fruit of a conquest, but is a Gift which the Father bestows on the Apostolic Missionary with the purpose of bringing about in the recipient a **similarity, likeness to the Holy Spirit**. One is born from on high [cf. Jn 3:3, 7] Jesus Christ was 'anointed' in His humanity by God the Father and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus received this 'consecration' so that He might pour it out through His sacred stigmata on His Church, so that all would live as sons and daughters of the Most High, and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, in the one Spirit.

3. The Theological Objective of Contemplating the Risen Lord: is made clear to the retreatants by St. Ignatius. It is a matter of some urgency to be involved in a **personal relationship with the Risen Lord**, Who is alive and present today in the life of the believer. This leads to a certain **experience of the Divinity**. The Crucified Jesus of Good Friday now manifests Himself as the Risen Lord on Easter. The disciple thus passes over **from the following of Jesus of Nazareth** to that **spiritual love of the glory of His divinity**. In this manner, does there spring forth the life of God.

a. The 'Climate', "Sphere", "Orbit" proper to the Risen Lord:

1.] In his *Spiritual Exercises* [## 222 & 226], the Fourth Week opens with the Apparition of Christ our Lord to Our Lady. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd points will be the usual ones as presented in the contemplation of the Last Supper. Then, the "Notes" ¹ point out the manner of proceeding, in accord with the direction the Saint offers for the Third Week, in the contemplation of the Passion of the Lord. That kind of reflection suggested for the Passion is then presented as the norm and paradigm to be followed in so far as the distribution of the contemplations are concerned. The various points are discussed for the various days and their adaptation. In accord with this format all the rest of the mysteries of Christ's life must be seen, all the way up through the Ascension, inclusively. Since this is the Apparition of the Risen Lord to Our Lady the point according to which the rest of the previous contemplations must be considered more or less as the "preambles" - what is being raised to utmost importance are the contemplations of the Fourth Week, on the Appearance to Our Lady of the Risen Lord and His Ascension.

2.] The rest of the Notes then allude principally to those means which ought to favor the climate of joy proper to the Resurrection: four 'exercises' are suggested, rather than five - by noting and pausing over those points that are the more important and from which one receives the greater spiritual motions and taste ¹.

There is suggested a certain adaptation of a number of the points to the spiritual situation - and then four ¹ of the 10 Additions are changed. These refer to the creation of the proper psychological and spiritual environment, the imagination and thoughts, and deeper motives - the light within the room, and the bodily posture. Even to the moment of getting up there is the suggestion to lead rejoicing in the thought of the Risen Lord. All of this "composition" of the inner mind and heart of the one praying, as well as to the physical ambiance, are all geared to a greater concentration on the exaltation of the Risen Lord.

b. Two Practical Suggestions of Approach

1.] The first is the pondering of the unfolding of the revealed history concerning the Risen Lord - especially with His dispersed Apostles, who were able to experience this New Creative Power of God and its transforming dynamism.

2.] The other is complementary: the "immediate access" to the Holy Spirit, that is proper to this Contemplation of the Fourth Week in order to arouse love. In this second suggestion the fervent believer basks in the presence of the Risen Lord in that period of expectancy of the Day of the Pentecost of Divine Love. In this view, through the obedience of faith in the presence of revealed mystery, **God "works" within, "descends and dwells" within the Apostolic Missionary.**

a.] God lives and works and exists within all of creation. All that "is", is a pledge of that which the Lord wishes to bestow further. The transcendent Divinity of the Risen Lord is He who maintains in being and in life all of creation. Ignatius seeks for this realization for us in the presence of the Risen Lord, in His Spirit, which is Love.

b.] In this way, the habitual response of the believer from now on in his spiritual and apostolic life will be that of living fully his own call to the Resurrection as an Apostolic Missionary. He will be further motivated to seek and to find the divine will, both for the experience of consolation, as well as for the discovery of God in all of creation. The reflection, in this case, that occurs within the fervent believer is intended to be a deeper experience of the Risen Lord. This becomes the proper activity of the Apostolic Missionary who wants to give back to God all that he has received - and with interest, serving him as would St. Paul in his Apostolic Mission.

c. The Meaning behind St. Ignatius' Choices of the Mysteries of the Risen Lord

1.] As is noted in the Third Week of the Exercises, there are detailed instructions for all seven days. There are clear indications also on how to dedicate oneself to the prayer of the week, in distributing the matter that would correspond to each one of these seven days [cf. SE # 208]. When it comes to the Fourth Week, however, this detail is missing, and there is only a general allusion to the detailed method of the previous week [cf. SE # 226]. As a result, to guide the Fourth week, St.

Ignatius - with clear dependence, and some creativity - has suggested 14 separate mysteries of the Risen Lord [cf. ## 299-312] - most of which are contained in Sacred Scripture and a few of which are not. These contemplations have as their goal that of an intensifying of love - for the Lord and commitment to His service.

2.] The **14 Mysteries of the Risen Lord** are the following:

- 1 - Appearance to Mary [non-biblical - cf. the "Carthusian"];
- 2 - To Mary Magdalen [Mk 16:1-6, 9];
- 3 - To the three Mary's [cf. Mt 28:8-10];
- 4 - To Peter at the Monument [Lk 24:12, 34];
- 5 - To the Disciples going to Emmaus [Lk 24:13-35];
- 6 - To the 11, Thomas being absent [Jn 20:19-23];
- 7 - The 11, Thomas being present [Jn 20:14-29];
- 8 - To the seven Disciples, fishing [Jn 21:1-17];
- 9 - To the Disciples on Tabor [Mt 28:16-19];
- 10 - To the 500 [1 Co 15:6];
- 11 - To St. James [1 Co 15:7];
- 12 - To Joseph of Arimathea [non-biblical - cf. "the Carthusian"];
- 13 - To Paul and the Patriarchs in the Descent [1 Co 15:8, 7];
- 14 - The Ascension [Ac 1:3-4, 9-11].

3.] St. Ignatius then presents these 14 'mysteries' of the apparitions of the Risen Lord for the contemplation of the retreatant. His method of procedure is quite orderly:

- the story of the apparition - he offers the existential situation of the persons in the plan of salvation;
- the appearance itself, as a happening for which the Risen Lord Himself takes the initiative;
- finally, the unfolding of the Christophany: a Gift of the Spirit, then each of them is "sent", bringing about the transformation of the personages, or by offering some explanatory remarks.

4.] The Saint gives greater importance to the apparition to the Blessed Mother. In general, he spells out in a very concise manner these various apparitions, following a schema created by himself, in coherence with the summary declaration. He imposes a very correct order to the traditional outline. He does not present the contemplation of Pentecost. He adds the appearance to Paul, and concludes his account with the description of the final activity of the Church, in awaiting for the Holy Spirit, presenting the Lukan scene of the Ascension. This presents in a very special manner the mystery of the resurrection to the Community. The emphasis in this on three elements: the *kerygma* and the faith - the sacraments, especially the Eucharist - and Peter at the Head of the hierarchy.

d. **The Appearance to Paul in the Lukan Account [cf. Lk 24:49, f.; Ac 1:3-11] of the Ascension:** there are three elements here:

1.] **The personal conversion of Ignatius was a faithful reflection of the apparition of the Lord to Paul along the road to Damascus** [cf. Ga 1:15, f.; Ph 3:12; 1 Co 9:1; 15:8; Ac 9:3-6]. The presence of this episode in the *Spiritual Exercises* possesses beyond any doubt for St. Ignatius a very special significance. Ignatius calls it an "apparition." It takes place after the Ascension. It is oriented toward the future of the Apostolic Mission, which is our own present situation. However, the author brings out the creative and foundational character of the Faith of the Church, similar to that of the "apparitions" of the 12, prior to the Ascension. For St. Ignatius, this includes all the officials which precede.

2.] The apparition to the holy Patriarchs in limbo ¹. Chronologically, this should have been the first that he was presenting. This took place at the moment of His descent into **Sheol** as Savior: "... His soul, likewise united with the divinity, descended into hell..." ¹. However, without entering into more refined doctrinal considerations, St. Ignatius placed it for reflection in the Fourth Week as the equivalent of a recapitulation for the Risen One regarding the entire past History of Salvation. The Risen Lord's redemptive influence includes all space and time, for all of humanity. In this manner, **the Risen One re-capitulates** in this manner, in a **redemptive act** in the plenitude of time [40 days], humanity and all of history in its integrity. The presence of the Risen Christ in His Church goes far beyond "before and after" - with the ascent the Contemplation toward Love is also **a Contemplation of Hope**.

3.] It is in this context that St. Ignatius' own conversion fits in - as was treated above. This involves a life-long quest of seeking to find God in all things - and a total self-giving to the Apostolic Mission in the Church.

†††

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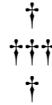
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