

The Spiritual Profile of



St. G. Bertoni's birth house in Verona, at the North of Italy

St. Gaspar Bertoni

Its Features and Spirit

Rev. John Ceresatto, CSS

Introduction

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Premise of the Author

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The Work has been seen: it may be printed

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† Joseph Amari

Bishop of Verona

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PREMISE¹

The biographical work that we present here, in a rather simple form and stylistically up-dated, is a re-edition of a volume now out of print, just about forgotten, that had as its title:

The Spiritual Profile of Venerable Gaspar Bertoni. Its Features and Spirit

This was printed in Verona in March 1953 and was intended to mark the First Centenary of the death of the man: the Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, popularly known as 'Stigmatines.'

It all came about in a rather striking and singular manner: this suffered and much worked over Spiritual Profile of the Man whom the Church would proclaim 'Blessed' on November 1, 1975, and 'Saint' on November 1, 1989, came to life, it can be said, in Mission territory. It began in Peking between August of 1950 and July of 1951, in that harsh climate of persecution which at that time raged in the China of Mao. [What a lesson for life did Fr. Bertoni's spirit of abandonment in God provide in those turbulent times!]

The forty and more years of absence from Italy on the part of the Author, far-away Missionary – by way of Rome - from China to Thailand, certainly did not contribute to support the survival of that willing labor, truly offered at that time to the Stigmatine world as a 'fraternal help to know better and to profitably love the Features and the Spirit of our Father's Spiritual Profile.'

Out of nowhere came the re-discovery and the determination to re-launch this work.

The revision and the refinement of this work are due to the real tireless work of a beloved Veronese Confrere, a most committed Missionary himself in Manila, Fr. Romolo Bertoni. In Verona, while making up part of the Community at San Leonardo, quite ill among our suffering Confreres, with the enthusiasm that is all his, he made good use of the prolonged and painful part of his convalescence for this purpose. Even though not fully re-covered, and look at him, already in flight for the Philippines,

¹ Fr. John Ceresatto this year celebrates 65 years of Stigmatine Priesthood. After having obtained the Doctorate in Missiology in Rome, he departed for the Stigmatine Mission in China. It was during his years in this Mission, that his idea for this wonderful biography matured. Following his expulsion from China, he left for the Mission in Thailand, where to this day he is still committed to the service of Bishops there. He spent years engaged in the formation of the young candidates to the Stigmatine life in the Priesthood.

NB: Translator's Note: while it is a privilege to translate this biography, from the outset I need to state that the wonderful use of the Italian language on the part of Fr. Ceresatto is a level beyond my translating ability. The ideal would have been to have these pages reviewed by the author, as he also knows English so very well.

to take up again his field of work after having handed over in all haste, these pages practically ready for their re-printing. From Thailand, here are the few final strokes, and now all is in readiness.

If this renewed volume will be received by its readers as a gift, the author and the reviser are proud that it comes from the Far East, as a humble homage offered to the Founder of the *Apostolic Missionaries* - the original title of the Institute - to whom the Saint of abandonment in God assigned as our field of endeavor the *Diocese and the World*.

Fr. John Ceresatto, CSS
Phuket, Thailand
February 13, 1991

2nd Edition – 1991
Fonts & Bibliography

A. Founder's Own Writings

1. Cause of Canonization

Veron. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Gasparis Bertoni... *Positio super virtutibus. Summarium super dubio: An constet de Virtutibus.* Insulae Liris 1931. [This is cited as: *Summarium Super Virt.*] [SSV].

Summarium Additionale Virtutibus Ex Officio compilatum: under the care of the Sacred Congregation of rites. Historical Section. Roma. [In this ponderous work there have been gathered an evaluated better than the early documentation presented, empty areas have been filled in, certain particulars have been added, and the entire endeavor has been corroborated with notes and other information fished out of more than a good 20 Libraries and Archives In Verona, Stresa and Rome. [This is cited as: *Summ Add.* [SA].

2. Computerized

Manoscritti di S. Gaspare Bertoni. The Archives of the Stimate. Verona²

3. Published

Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni. Original *Latin* Text with Italian translation. Historical Introduction and Notes. Ed. Fr. Joseph Stofella. Verona: 1951

Epistolario, under the care of Fr. Joseph Stofella. Verona: 1954.

Memorial Privato. St. Gaspar's Spiritual Diary [MP] [1808-1813] in: *Collectanea Stigmatina* [CS] Volume

Pagine di Vita Cristiana. A Collection of the Early Sermons of the Servant of God, Gaspar Bertoni. Ed. Stocchiero. Vicenza: 1947.

Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli della Congregazione. Verona 1886

4 Works about St. Gaspar Bertoni

AA.VV. Saggi sullo Spirito del B. Gaspare Bertoni, edited under the care of the General Curia of the Stigmatines. Rome 1983-1987.

AA.VV., Gaspare Bertoni, un santo per il nostro tempo. Supplement to the *Missionario* n. 7-8 1989.

² Fr. Louis Benaglia, CSS undertook the painstaking task of transcribing these thousands of pages by typewriter when the Stigmatine Novitiate was lived at Grottaferrata. These pages were then computerized [now available also in 5 CD ROM'S] by Fr. Pasquale Cavallo, CSS and his Lay Stigmatine group.

AA. VV., *San Gaspare Bertoni. Symposium Bertonianum*, held on the occasion of the Canonization of the Founder of the Stigmatines. Rome, ANGELICUM. October 28, 1989. Ed. Stimmgraf. Verna 1990.

BONETTI, Ignatius:

- *San Gaspare Bertoni. Note di Spiritualita' Ed Stimmagraf. 1989*
- *La Grammatica di Don Gaspare Bertoni – Meditazioni Quotidiane 1993*

DALLE VEDOVE, Nello:

- *Un modello di Santo Abbandono: fisionomia spirituale del Ven. Gaspare Bertoni. Verona 1951*
- *San Gaspare Bertoni, Fondatore degli Stigmatini. Ed. Stimmagraf. 1989.*

NB: Fr. Dalle Vedove's magnum opus, his marvelous definitive biography of St. Gaspar Bertoni:

1. *La giovinezza del Vern. Gaspare Bertoni e l'ambiente veronese dell'ultimo '700 [1777-1800]. Roma 1971, pp. 483.*
2. *Vita e pensiero del Beato Gaspare Bertoni agli albori dell' 800 veronese. Part I [18800-1808] Roma 1975, pp. 714.*
3. *Vita e pensiero del Beato Gaspare Bertoni agli albori dell' 800 veronese. Part II [1809-1816]. Roma 1977, pp. 754.*
4. *Il Beato Gaspare Bertoni e l'Istituto delle 'Stimamte' nella prima meta' dell' 800 veronese. Part I [1816-1827]. Roma 1981, pp. 571.*
5. *Il Beato Gaspare Bertoni e l'Istituto delle 'Stimamte' nella prima meta' dell' 800 veronese. Part II [1827-1839] Rome 1984, pp. 714.*
6. *San Gaspare Bertoni e l'Istituto delle 'Stimamte' nella prima meta' dell' 800 veronese. Part III [1839-1855]. pp. 768.*

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BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Fr. John Ceresatto was born in Concordia Sagittaria [VE]. He entered the Stigmatine Congregation and pronounced his first religious profession in 1934, and was ordained a priest in 1940. After having obtained the Doctorate in Missiology, he left for the Mission in China. In the meantime, and while a young Missionary in China, this 'Spiritual Profile' of Gaspar Bertoni was born.

After the expulsion from China, he left immediately for Thailand in 1954, and has served there for over a half a century. He dedicated himself for many years in the formation of young Stigmatines there, and now the region has been made a Stigmatine 'Province'.