

LENOTTI:  
COMPENDIUM RUDE  
= 1 =

**Fr. JOHN B. LENOTTI**

**Master of Novices**

§§§§§

**IInd Superior General  
[1871-1875]**

**DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS**

**on the**

**FOUNDER'S  
ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS**

**SECTION ONE**  
**The Founder's Compendium Rude**

**PREFACE:**

Presentation of Writings – Explanation of the Constitutions – the Spirit of Fr. Gaspar – The Conscience of the Religious and the Stigmatine - *Humble exercises* - Perfection of Poverty: the Founder's words – the example of Jesus Christ – Fr. Lenotti and the *Contemplata tradere* - Appendix – Fr. Lenotti and Fr. Lancisio .

**INTRODUCTION**

The practice is from the Company of Jesus, through our Founder – For exercising of fervor, or increasing piety – A Capitular Commission, and Chapter XIX – New Canon Law and New Constitutions – A Capitular Deliberation – should we go back to the old practice?

**I. THE FRUIT OF THE DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS**

A means of perfection – an alarm clock and lamp along the way of virtue – It is necessary to desire to garner some fruit and to recall their purpose – To apply to oneself the truths discussed, and to treasure these by returning to the – To come to a practical resolve.

**II. A RELIGIOUS IN GENERAL, A RELIGIOUS IN OUR CONGREGATION**

A man who abandons all for the service of God and his own salvation - Which is all in the exercise of virtue – Whoever seeks the divine will and the joy of Jesus Christ his model – Dead to the world and therefore, blessed – In particular, the Stigmatine is a religious soldier – Spirit of sacrifice, generosity.

**III. OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES**

Soldiers of Christ – Regular Discipline - The defense-wall of God's Law and help to observe it – Diligence in the minute observances – Perfection and predestination from these – The example of St. Leonard of Port Maurice – Exhortation.

**IV. THE END: APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES FOR THE SERVICE OF BISHOPS  
MANNER:**

*Weapons* – the divine word and prayer. – End – Manner: as the Company of Jesus towards the Pope, so are we towards the Bishops, without binding ourselves by vow to individual Bishops = *Prepared for all* – *Weapons*: the sword of the Divine Word and that of Prayer. The saying of Fr. Carafa – exhortation.

**V. TO SERVE GOD AND THE CHURCH ABSOLUTELY GRATUITOUSLY**

The gratuitous service of observing Missionaries – The Example of God's Son- To serve God, the Church, our neighbors – example of St. Ignatius - the Founder and Fr. Marani – Exhortation.

**VI. IMMUNE FROM DIGNITIES, RESIDENCES AND PERPETUAL AND PARTICULAR CARE OF SOULS AND NUNS. TO GO ANYWHERE IN THE DIOCESE AND IN THE WORLD**

A heart as broad as the world.

**VII. COMMON LIFE**

**VIII. PERPETUAL EXERCISE IN EVERYTHING OF OBEDIENCE, CHASTITY AND POVERTY.**

**IX. THE MANNER OF LIVING...IN HARMONY WITH THE MORE PERFECT CLERICS AMONG WHOM THEY LIVE, AND FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE FAITHFUL.**

**Fr. JOHN BAPTIST LENOTTI**  
**DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS**  
**on the**  
**ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FOUNDER**

**Historical Preface**<sup>1</sup>

From the early Chronicles of the Congregation, it is known that a Novitiate was erected on **February 28, 1857**, a Saturday afternoon, at the House of the Most Holy Trinity in Verona, near the *Stimmate*. At that time there were 13 Novices<sup>2</sup>. Fr. Lenotti was named the Novice Master. He was still there on November 4, 1863, the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coming of the Founder and his companions to the House of the *Stimmate*.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, Fr. Marani, Superior General would assign him as Prefect of Studies, as is known from a Document dated **July 27, 1865**, being succeeded by Fr. Richard DaPrato.<sup>4</sup> These Conferences on the Constitutions probably began with his work as Master of Novices, and continued over these 8 years. However, this does not exclude other dimensions of his broad and competent service in the Apostolic Mission he offered to God through the Community.

The third fascicle of Vol. 3 of the *Collectanea Stigmatina* is a collection of the Exhortations and Instructions which Fr. John Lenotti delivered over the long years that he was assigned to the formation of young Stigmatines early in our history: he served as Novice Master, Director of the Student House, Prefect of Studies, all before becoming Superior General. Most of the Exhortations contained in this source are found in little notebooks that would have been in vogue in the old school of the *Stimmate* of that era – each one of these presented a challenge to the good Father to fill them entirely. A part of these, however, are found on separate sheets of paper – remnants of what were perhaps scrap paper – these were held together in a kind of folder, but not sewn together. This seems to be a lived indication of the Poverty Fr. Lenotti personally lived – as he quoted from the example of the great servant of God, the Ven. Fr. Balthasar Alvarez, SJ, one of the Confessors of St. Teresa of Avila. The Divine Master revealed to her what a privileged place that good Priest already enjoyed in heaven, as a rare human being, who had cultivated such a high grade of perfection. He stood out among his own contemporaries – and there were some great saints in his epoch!<sup>5</sup>

Regarding Fr. Lenotti's Exhortations, or Instructions, the most numerous group of them is that which is dedicated to the explanation of the Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni. In fact, as Fr. Charles Zara [one of his very first students] attests, that Fr. Lenotti

---

<sup>1</sup> The great Stigmatine Historian, Fr. Joseph Stofella, has provided abundant reading material on the life of Fr. Lenotti, Superior General from 1871-1875, when he died on his birthday, September 5, 1875, at the age of 58. [ These notes are taken from **cf. CS Vol. III, pp. 388-569**].

<sup>2</sup> cf. CS III, pp. 88, ff.

<sup>3</sup> O.c. pp. 91. ff/

<sup>4</sup> l.c., p. 94

<sup>5</sup> Fr. Louis duPont, *Vie du P. Balthasar Alvarez*, translated by Fr. Marcel Bouix. Paris: 1873.

spent many years in explaining the Founder's Rules to the Community. He was also among the first to offer some reflection on them. These compositions have been placed here more or less in accord with the order of the Constitutions themselves, as they unfold. Among these papers, we can find certain points just jotted down, outlines of further reflections, fragments, rather notable developments, complete – or nearly so – treatments of these treasured Rules of the Founder. However, it should also be remembered, Fr. Lenotti did not always write down these discourses in fulfilling this domestic ministry of his. Very often he had to adapt somewhat in haste, and even up to the actual moment of delivery he seemed to jotting down some further thoughts for this normal exercise of his public Apostolic Ministry. Who ever would have thought that one fine day that those poor scribblings of his would have seen the light of day, squeezed out of him, as though under a wine-press!

Therefore, Fr. Lenotti's writings do not manifest a systematic order, nor are they a complete treatment – rather, there are many noticeable gaps in his writings, developments that are not always exhaustive. At times, one may note even a certain dryness and an insufficiency in his notes. He makes frequent recourse to the authoritative teaching of others, and employs expressions which, at times, are far from what our modern taste would be. And yet, if there is ever a time when the Lord's invitation: *collect the fragments so that they will not perish* - was to the point, this saying has an almost irresistible application in these writings. The authenticity of the spirit of our Saintly Founder can reasonably demand that in a Congregation planned by him, we could **not find anywhere, any other person, or expression or work beyond and above this privileged son whom the Founder himself formed with his own hands**<sup>6</sup>: The person, the word and the work in Fr. Lenotti all come together in carrying out that mandate which he had received from his Father General, Fr. John M. Marani: his challenge was to 'transmit, as conscience demands, into our young candidates the spirit of the Reverend Father Gaspar!' <sup>7</sup>

For Fr. Lenotti, this was indeed a matter of his delicate conscience! This dominated in him always – and in responsibility of assisting in forming consciences to tend toward that perfection in the specific manner of Stigmatine consecrated life, which is the vocation of each religious in the Community. Fr. Lenotti presents expertly that perfection required of an *Apostolic Missionary* : each Stigmatine is called from on high, in order that he might not depart from those traditions of the Canonized Founder, and to live that example as evidenced in his first followers. Fr. Lenotti himself experienced this always as a stimulus along the way of making himself sharper, even to the very end of his life and appearance before God's Tribunal.

In all of this, there does not appear any sense of personal distinction, or self-concern or any juridical pretext. His entire thrust is to overcome all obstacles, and to seek always those reasonable means to the achievement of holiness.

---

<sup>6</sup> In a certain sense, it seems as though Fr. Bertoni himself formed young Lenotti - so many of the other early Stigmatines came as already ordained priests – but John Lenotti was blessed with the privileged first formation of Fr. Bertoni himself

<sup>7</sup> cf. CS I, p. 283; CS III, pp. 76, 133.

All of this from the heart and pen of Fr. Lenotti who had nothing to do ever with any pretext for his own important role in the lives of many young Stigmatine candidates. He thought he might elevate the state of the Coadjutor Brothers, even by taking the brooms out of their hands, himself and other humble instruments of their work, in order to join them: this was the style of Fr. Lenotti, Priest, Novice Master, who was always quite at home in these humble tasks. Even as Superior General, he was most pleased to see the Fathers occupied in humble tasks around the community: it seemed to him that at such a sight, for him this was a return to the times of St. Gaspar! Such *humble exercises*, were meant for the Stigmatines of every level. He shared in the concern for those who might aspire to a higher grade of membership! The only sane ambition was for that of a higher degree of perfection: for this perfection there would never be required state examinations, nor university degrees – as useful as these could be, and in such full accord with the Founder’s ideal<sup>8</sup>.

There is no wonder, then, that due to the strict agreement that Fr. Lenotti had made with God that he would propose with all candor a full level of perfection in the living of the vow of Poverty. My considered guess is that he had fixed in his heart those characteristic words of his revered Father and Founder: these are the words that Fr. Lenotti had touched upon in his own life, also in order to render them contemporary to his own story, noting that these principles have an invincible authenticity. He used to quote Fr. Gaspar to his students:

**‘Let us remember that we really are poor; and that if there is anything in our lives, it is not ours, but all belongs to the Lord. Let us keep uppermost in mind that we have not come here to live as lords, but as poor men of Jesus Christ.’**

There certainly must have come into his mind those good corrections and penances that in this regard, Fr. Gaspar did not spare from his sons. Fr. Lenotti’s great challenge was that he had to form other sons of this Founder, men who would always be worthy of him<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. CF # 68.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Summ. Add., Doc. XX, p. 176*. Still today the substance and the spirit of those words of St. Gaspar might be considered as ‘integral’ as noted in various of his Constitutions regarding the example of Christ and the early Church [cf. CF # # 259; 272, 273]: this spirit of the Apostles around Christ - a Stigmatine form of the ‘Christological Constellation’, finding our point of gravity in Him - is solidly behind the ideal of the *Missionarii Apostolici*. The challenge of Poverty, and all other aspects of the Stigmatine life, always needs to be re-meditated in this light. It was the distinct merit of the Constitution Commission elected by the **XIIth General Chapter** in 1911 that it had worked out a formula of this kind with regard to Poverty for the Chapter of 1914: which touched their proposal up lightly and this appeared as Const. N. 95, of those first Constitutions that had been printed following the Chapter of 1917. This was the style also of quoting the *Common Rules* [of St. Ignatius] where in treating with our neighbors once more the example of our Lord Himself is cited in support. **Both examples: that of Jesus Christ and that of the Apostles** – are also in the Constitutions of our Founder, as noted here. Over the years the work of that Commission of 1911 does show that those descendants of Fr. Bertoni did try to develop this as our ultimate *Compendium* - the Apostolic Church: **Apostolic Missionaries** in the *modus, of the Apostles and Christ*. This was the challenge of St. Paul to the Corinthians: *Be imitators of me – as I am of Christ!* [1 Co 4:16]. All light

It is our view that also in these Exhortations and Instructions of his, Fr. Lenotti shows himself almost to be *connaturally* that man who had well incarnated in himself that principle from St. Thomas Aquinas, suggested by Fr. Bertoni. This is most evident in a reflection of his that he made on the Founder's Constitutions, **Part IV, c. 2, n. 1 – CF# 49** :

*In this religious, clerical Sodality, the purpose of which is not only to contemplate, but to hand on to others what has been contemplated, there is required not simply ordinary knowledge, but rather one that is perfect in those matters which pertain to faith and morals. And as a result, it is also necessary that the religious clerics commit themselves in this religious state to the acquiring of knowledge of this kind.<sup>10</sup>*

There is particular interest also due to the well-known Thomistic formula – in the thought and expression of St. Gaspar, even our least religious Institute is not in that same level of excellence perhaps in participating in its own humble manner, in that definition which St. Thomas offers for his own **Order of Preachers**: *this is a state of Religion which is instituted to contemplate, and to hand on only what has been contemplated through communicating doctrine and preaching*<sup>11</sup>.

It seems certain that this contemplating, and handing on to others only that which has been contemplated, in the humble and simple life of our Fr. Lenotti, were truly<sup>12</sup> the two permanent moments of his entire life, as its inspiration and his ultimate expiration. Fr. Colossio, OP, hoped that a campaign could be instituted that this Thomistic formula might always be noted in its integrity, and undivided, in that it so well explains the life that Fr. Lenotti lived in a personal life-long commitment. Fr. Colossio went on to note in his quoted article that in its integrity this Thomistic formula well expresses the proper relationship between the interior life and that of the ministry in the Apostolic Mission, the balance between the contemplative and active aspects of life. The second members of this formula, i.e., the *tradere* - is not there *in the manner of subtraction, but in the manner of addition*. Thus, it seems to students of Stigmatine history that this beautiful formula was almost as his 'second-nature', without his perhaps ever fully realizing it, was lived in the life of the humble Fr. Lenotti.

In the pages that follow, there is no distinction made between those Conferences which Fr. Lenotti gave to his beloved Novices, and those which he delivered to the wider Community. Fr. Lenotti's Conferences also point out that with the Founder's death, his Rule and spirit did not pass away with him – these conferences offer a concrete proof that the Founder's paternal design did not fail in the efforts of his sons to bring it to fruition.

---

comes from Him All who strive to formulate the Constitutions would do well to keep in mind the examples of Christ and the Apostles

<sup>10</sup> This **CF # 49** is taken almost *verbatim* from F. Suarez, SJ, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, **Bk V, c. 1, n. 10 – p. 803 a**

<sup>11</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, **II-II, q. 188, a. 7 c.**

<sup>12</sup> Here Fr. Lenotti quotes an article of a Dominican contemporary of his. Cf. In our time, Fr. Innocenzio Colossio, OP, in *Rivista di Aascetica e Mistica*, fasc. IV-V, 1961, p. 381

Some of these reflections indeed merit the name of *Exhortation*, encouragement to live the ideal – others seem to have been inspired by some occasion or other, liturgical, disciplinary, or domestic. Might it not be said that that there are not lacking to us matters that of indeed particular interest to us a century and a half after his death?

The reader himself may make a personal reflection. It may be in reading Fr. Lenotti's style, one may become somewhat irritated: the old Master of Novices has the tendency to draw himself under the wings of a favored author of his, a Jesuit Father Lancisio. It is evident that Fr. Lenotti in jotting down these notes well over a century ago, that he was not in competition for any literary reward: nonetheless, he has made a solid contribution to the history and the authentic life of the Stigmatine Community. Regarding this Fr. Lancisio, it might be recalled here that there can be noted in the Method of Studies taught to Fr. Lenotti, before and after he was ordained a priest, by his own venerated Father, St. Gaspar Bertoni, we are told: *Also for spiritual reading every day, he had me read from the Venerable Father Lancisio* – this would be Fr. Nicholas Lanczyki, SJ, who died in 1652<sup>13</sup>. Fr. Bertoni had suggested this reading to Fr. Lenotti. In those times of the Founder – and for sometime following his death - in addition to the public, or common spiritual reading, there was also conducted personal spiritual reading throughout the Community. And the fruit of that reading is most evident in Fr. Lenotti.

It might be noted here that the four fascicles of papers which follow, this are almost consumed in writing – some of what follows is also taken from other fonts of his, all hand-written by Fr. Lenotti – and all of these were intended for the exclusive use of the Stigmatine Community of that time. Thus, to include all of this material is the motivating intention here – and this has added considerably to the amount of material available. From this, there has been suggested the idea of drawing up an entire work that indeed might bear the Title: “**Father Lenotti's Volume.**” Even with this, his contribution would not be totally consumed, exhausted within this one set of writings – who can place any limit on Divine Providence? The author of this Historical Introduction, in the year of this writing has reached the 77<sup>th</sup> year of his life<sup>14</sup> - and while enjoying presently good health, the good Lord could take him from this endeavor as he sees fit, even this very day. But, there are others, in full strength, and young men who are coming along – Whoever is alive, might see to further this work along!

Fr. Joseph Stofella, CPS<sup>15</sup>

†  
†††  
†

---

<sup>13</sup> Fr. Lanczynski wrote: *Opuscula Spiritualia*, Antwerp 1650, 2 Volumes. About 1700 pages ion all!

<sup>14</sup> Fr. Stofella is noted as having been born on November 13, 1885 – and would die three years after these lines were written, at the age of 80, on March 22, 1966. [The American translator of these lines is rapidly approaching 73 years of age – about 100 days to go!]

<sup>15</sup> The former abbreviation of the Congregation, for our young members was: *Congregation of Stigmatine Priests* – the Chapter of 1964, strived to make this more inclusive: *The Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata*.

What follows here is an *Introduction* – also written by Fr. Stofella as a more immediate presentation of the Domestic exhortations and Conferences which follow.[cf. **CS III, pp. 393-398**]

## INTRODUCTION

### The Domestic Exhortation

After our Preface presented on the previous pages, it is only right that there should be added here a further *Introduction*, as seems to be required by the circumstances intrinsic to the collection of notes being offered here. It is helpful to make known what was understood by earlier generations of Stigmatines by the ***Domestic Exhortation***: this was the instrument of which Fr. Lenotti made such competent use in the religious formation of our first Stigmatine Communities.

The ***Domestic Exhortation*** is an institution in Stigmatine life dating from the Founder himself, even though it was not his invention: its origin goes back across the centuries, to the very dawn of the Monastic or Religious Institute in this world. It is well known that St. Gaspar Bertoni took this up, as he did so much else, from the **Company of Jesus**.

Among the ***Rules of the Offices*** there are – in the Company of Jesus – also rules for the Rector, and under this following heading: ***Concerning the Spiritual Care of our Own Members***, there is this following Rule:

*Either every Friday, or every other Friday, the Rector personally – or someone else in his stead - will give an Exhortation to our Members which will present well the very nature of our Institute, in what would concern the observation of the Constitutions and the rules, fraternal charity, humility, patience, mortification, and those other virtues, especially obedience: however, at times there can be had in the place of this Exhortation, a certain conversation [collatio : Conference] concerning these matters.*

Regarding this second alternative – which was facultative and only rarely employed – does not merit our spending much time on it: as such a gathering would take nothing away from the original character of the usual, periodic ***Domestic Exhortation***. Rather it seems that it might be said that the Jesuit Rule was referring to the venerable ***Collations*** of the old Fathers of the Desert, as we see embodied in Cassian, and this simply confirms their character and their importance.

What is under discussion here, then, is that Domestic Exhortation either weekly or every fifteen days: either every Friday, or every other Friday. This Rule of the Company of Jesus passed, precisely as is, into the Rules for the Director which Fr. Lenotti produced as Superior General: with the exception of one sole variant in the form right at the beginning: ***Either every week, or every other week, on the day established***.<sup>16</sup>

Among the means which our saintly Founder indicated for us – or put better, prescribed for the spiritual progress our Members, right after his listing of the daily spiritual practices which are summarized in prayer [those in common, meditation, Mass

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. CS III, p. 281, 20.

and the Office, Spiritual Reading the Three-fold Examen] – there is immediately mentioned the following:

*The first means of achieving Spiritual Progress is prayer.*

*In addition to the daily, common prayers and those that are obligatory, and which are contained most especially in the Divine Office and Mass, to be celebrated when this is possible, by divine grace, attentively and devoutly, the following prayers are offered:*

*Every morning, meditation before Mass for one half hour. Then, Spiritual reading after lunch for twenty minutes.*

*The three-fold examination of conscience, namely, in the morning as soon as one awakes; at noon; and before retiring at night.*

*One should listen to sermons [concio] which are publicly delivered in our churches, as well as at home, for the purpose of exciting devotion... [CF # 47].*

It seems that the Legislator here was thinking naturally of that preaching every Friday honoring the Five Wounds<sup>17</sup>, a devotion also known as the Devotions for a Good Death : this involved a sermon, conference, each week and seems to be what Fr. Bertoni intended in his CF # 47: ... sermons at home for the purpose of exciting devotion... While it does not specifically add ‘weekly’, but its being paired with the public form of preaching, makes one naturally think of a weekly Domestic Exhortation. This is all the more possible because when the Founder was actually composing his *Original Constitutions* - in the 1840’s – this practice was being observed in the living of the Community life, as is clear from a number of indications that have come down to us. One of these in particular would be a bit of information St. Gaspar sent along to his beloved Fr. Louis Bragato, away in the Court of Vienna, dated, September 26, 1840:

*...I can tell you that from Monday onward I preach every day in the House, in the Oratory, after Matins...*<sup>18</sup>

This ‘Oratory’ of which the Founder speaks, had been inaugurated and opened in that year, 1840, and it was near the Founder’s room at the *Stimate* – unfortunately it was later torn down.<sup>19</sup>

Fr. Bertoni’s text was promptly inserted in Fr. Lenotti’s *Regulae Communes*, just changing the case ending of *concio*, to the accusative, objective, case *concionem*, and rephrasing the sentence this way: *all shall listen to* - to conclude it. Whatever these small changes might be, the practice goes far back in our history, as noted above in the texts [*each week, or every other week*] – this was a weekly, or every other week, exercise. The whole purpose of the *Domestic Exhortation* – and thus, also its content -

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Letters to the Roman Pontiff of St. Gaspar, especially his third one to Pope Gregory XVI in 1844, in someone else’s hand-writing – [cf. *Epistolario*, pp.344, ff.]

<sup>18</sup> cf. *Epistolario*, p. 324

<sup>19</sup> The choice of the title of the *Transfiguration* is interesting – particularly in our time with the Holy Father, John Paul II, adding this to the Mysteries of Life in the praying of the Rosary – Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, October 16, 2002 – and he quotes Paul VI’s expression that the Rosary is the Compendium of all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety [cf. RVM #2; cf. also *Marialis Cultus* of Paul VI]. The *Transfiguration* was noted on the way toward Calvary – and beyond toward the Resurrection. Fr. Stofella seems to have deeply regretted its being dismantled].

remains designated with the Founder's words: *for the purpose [sake] of exciting fervor*. This was worked out in a project by Fr. John Rigoni, in 1880, entitled *The Formula of the Institute and the Constitutions with Appendices*. This was done in the hopes of obtaining eventual approval from Rome. So, too, under the pen of Fr. Richard Tabarelli in a Plan worked out by him nine years later, in 1889 for the same scope, this exercise of the regular *Domestic Exhortation* is retained. There is a slight difference in the wording introduced by Fr. Tabarelli: in place of the Founder's words describing the purpose of this [*ad fervorem excitandam*], Fr. Tabarelli wrote [*ad pietatem fovendam* : for the sake of exciting piety]. The frequency of the Domestic Exhortation was retained, *at least twice a month*.<sup>20</sup>

The new formula entered, then, in the re-editing of the *Common Rules* which had been prepared then for reading at table. The substance of the legislation, as everyone sees, did not undergo – or at least, did not seem to suffer – any substantial changes: however, there might be noted there could be seen a slight concession, with the switch from the word *fervorem* to the word *pietatem*. However, in the word *pietatem* there were assumed – or at least the legislator intended to reassume – all those duties that are essentially imported by the obligation of tending toward perfection. The sentiment of that obligation of tending toward perfection was meant to be retained alive and well in the community.

And this is what emerges clearly from all these Exhortations – of which traces of them remain in our Archives – even though these are not literary master-pieces. Nonetheless, of all of the early Stigmatines who composed these Exhortations, still found in our Archives in Verona, those of Fr. Lenotti remain in the very first place, and these have been published as translated here<sup>21</sup>. There are some fragments and traces from the pen of Fr. Richard DaPrato – then, there are rather numerous exemplars from the pen of Fr. Mark Bassi<sup>22</sup>. There are also a few others, not many of them, but very well thought out and solid in doctrine, found among the *Domestic Exhortations* of Fr. Peter Vignola, addressed to the Community of the *Stimmate*, when that was not a very large community. Then, there are a few of a more modest level, composed by Fr. Bartholomew Perazzani, for the small House of Parma, and for our Students, housed then in St. Teresa's, Verona. And finally there are those *Exhortations* – perhaps in the style of Manzoni – that were willingly listened to willingly by the old Community at the *Stimmate*, addressed to the Members by Fr. John Baptist Tommasi, later our Superior General<sup>23</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> These matters are treated in the **9<sup>th</sup> General Chapter** and the following – the Congregation was approved – but the Constitutions not yet – just prior to the opening of the stormy **12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter**, in September 1890.

<sup>21</sup> cf. **CS III, pp. 388-569**

<sup>22</sup> cf. **CS II, pp. 230, ff.**

<sup>23</sup> As Superior General, Fr. Tommasi published a number of his *Circular Letters* and in these one may note lengthy passages taken from his *Domestic Exhortations* delivered to the Community at the *Stimmate* of which he was Superior.

It would be useful to cast a glance at the Capitular Commission chosen by the **18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter** of 1911<sup>24</sup>. Their responsibility was to review and recast the Constitutions to submit to the Holy See in the hopes of obtaining approval for them. This group presented its finished work to the **19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter** of 1914.

In their finished work, the Domestic Exhortation – long legislated for *to be held at least twice a month* – does not appear, other than equivalently under a number asking for a Monthly Day of Retreat. However, for this, there was presented a very serious and well spelled out plan. Their text in this regard was: *to these pious daily exercises [in the Monthly Retreat] there is to be added at least a sermon for the sake of furthering the religious spirit:* therefore, the Exhortation would be held only once a month: but this text of 1911-1914 offered also an alternative: *or some opportune reading that should be held for one half hour.* From the style of this writing, it would seem that this text was derived from authoritative texts.

There is little doubt, then, that the old practice of the *Domestic Exhortation* is presented here in a descending phase. However, in the **19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter** of 1914, it simply disappears from our legislative texts. The Project proposed by the Capitular Commission for the Monthly Retreat did not reach the new rendition of the Constitutions. There thus disappeared also the word *sermon [concio]* that was quite reduced nor was there felt any need to place an alternative. This is the text that resulted from all these changes, as was found in our old Constitution n. 131:

*Every month, on the First Friday, or if that day should be impeded, or some other more opportune day, all the members, removed as far as will be possible from their earthly cares, will give themselves over to spiritual recollection.*

This remained the definitive formula for years.

However, then came Canon Law, and the Code of 1917, with its Canon # 509 2: *The local Superiors will take care... 2° that at least twice each month there should be had a pious exhortation to all the members of the religious family.* This expression: *at least twice a month* brings us back to our own past history. Beyond this clarification – for, it is clear that there is presented here a minimal limit, and which permits [as the text reads, *at least twice a month*] – and even encourages to go a bit beyond that which is imposed – the formula is really generic, and it is found in the universal Code obliging all religious to observe this prescription, provided we do not lessen our Stigmatine piety. Yet, each one of us might retain for ourselves to re-discover our own specific traditions. Our Superiors might indeed go back to recapture our own healthy traditions, and they could rightfully leave aside the Canonical injunction *at least twice a month*, and base themselves on the authoritative challenge of the Canons themselves. *Twice a month there should be a pious exhortation delivered to all the members of the Family.* Our Constitutions, then, of 1925, picked up on the formula of the Code of Canon Law. What

---

<sup>24</sup> Fr. Octavian Piccoli was Chairman- and its members were Fr. John B. Zaupa; Fr. Joseph Fiorio; Fr. John Baptist Castellani; Fr. Paul Sozzi.

had been forgotten then, after reducing the *twice*, to *once* – the Code challenged us to re-discover our own healthy early Stigmatine tradition.

At a certain point in all this trajectory, the Community issued a *Capitular Deliberation*, which over the years was almost automatically renewed. It began under one form and the appeal is to go back to one of our better traditions. In seeking the best formula, would we go back to the wording of the Founder himself [cf. CF # 47: *for the purpose of exciting fervor* - or, at least that later expression: *for the fomenting of piety*? Or, to the wording: *for the furthering of the religious spirit*? The *Capitular Deliberation* read: ‘In the act that recommends early the Domestic Exhortation, twice a month, prescribed by Constitution 139, there should be indicated the practical fulfillment of this prescription. Especially in the Houses with fewer members, there should be some hint as to its practical realization. Rather than a formal discourse, in such cases it could be simply the recalling to mind of those points of religious discipline of which here is the greater need.’

Fr. Lenotti would remind us that a recalling to mind of some disciplinary prescription should not be put off until the assigned time for the Domestic Exhortation. Nor should the Domestic Exhortation be pumped up as some kind of a formal discourse, delivered with great pomp and splendor. A formal discourse would have to have its own head, its body as well as its tail, or conclusion: in this sense the Domestic Exhortation has to have some order to it. In order for it to be efficacious, it needs to give some heed to the dignity of the one giving it and the ones who are listening to it. And it should go on for some 20, or 30 minutes. The Capitular Deliberation suggested that the Domestic Exhortation should be a recalling to mind, and not something else.

This Capitular Deliberation offered only a certain indication: however, it is an indication that is somewhat limiting, which comes from on high. Would anyone believe that it is not a prescript that commits us? Fr. Lenotti was a zealous Director, *who had at heart the good of our Institute*, and really wanted to give to the pious Canonical Exhortation the purpose and content that had been indicated by the Saintly Stigmatine Founder. In other words, his hope was to re-ignite in a positive manner the essential fervor of the community’s tending toward perfection. His challenge was to accomplish this in a world that only to some extent experienced this as a problem. In our day an age, such a project might only meet with smiles and good natured criticism: is this not just a material fulfillment of an old rule.

To draw this Introduction to a close, it is our hope that the example of Fr. Lenotti might concur efficaciously to restore to the Canonical exhortation its original character. It was meant to be a recalling to mind of those points of religious discipline – each Director would have at his disposition numberless occasions for this. Rather, let us yearn not to lose the opportunity of doing something *for the purpose of inspiring the religious spirit, or piety* – or, to use the expression our Founder used in his *Original Constitutions*,

# 47: *for the purpose of exciting devotion*. Also in this matter, to turn to the ‘old ways’ would certainly mean making real progress<sup>25</sup>.

---

<sup>25</sup> Fr; Lenotti points out the real contribution that Fr. Peter Vignola made in this regard. He succeeded Fr. Richard DaPrato [+ October 17, 1872] in the direction of the House of the *Stimmate*, during that period when the early Community was still dispersed due to those enduring difficulties with the Government. On November 28, 1872, Fr. P. Vignola opened his series of Domestic Exhortations with these words: *For the first time, I have the happiness of speaking with my companions in obedience to the Very Reverend Superior, and the fulfillment of my office, in order to exhort one another mutually and virtuously to operate according to the norms. So I feel the need of taking inspiration by saying a word on this our state in life and on the spirit with which we ought to procure to inspire one another in this state.*

These are some of the themes touched upon by Fr. P. Vignola: 1. On the Religious Spirit; 2. On the Spirit of Perfection; 3. On Compunction and Penance; 4. Humility; 5. Obedience; 6. Poverty; 7. Purity or Chastity; 8 Devotion. Who could deny that today we might still be in great need of reflecting on such matters?

**PART ONE**  
**FR. LENOTTI AND FR. BERTONI'S *COMPENDIUM RUDE***

**I. HOW ONE SHOULD DERIVE FRUIT FROM THESE  
*DOMESTIC EXHORTATIONS***

**Domestic Exhortations are listed among the means of perfection – they are like an alarm-clock, and a lamp along the path of virtue - There is needed the desire to cull some profit from them and to remember their ultimate purpose – It is necessary to apply to ourselves these truths, and to make a treasure of them by applying them to ourselves. It is necessary to reduce the ideals into practice.**

By the singular Mercy of God and by the sweet and admirable paths of His Providence, we were drawn from the tumultuous sea of this world, where according to the views of the Saints and of the Divine Scriptures – with all the scandals, and all the noise, the dangers of our own perdition, and the many obstacles to virtue. From all these, we have been placed in the sure port of the religious state, where there is still that danger of becoming lost, as there are the even greater means to enable us to keep us safe and sound in the divine service, and to walk forward in virtue.

Now, among the means that our Saintly Founder offers to us, in order to keep us far from defects and enabling us to make progress in virtue and in perfection, there are those weekly Spiritual Exhortations – *a sermon delivered at home for the purpose of exciting devotion*<sup>26</sup> - which serve continuously that can awaken us, in order that we do not fall asleep along the paths of the spirit. These *Domestic Exhortations* serve as a lamp enabling us to see those obstacles that might be encountered: *Your word is a lamp for my feet* [cf. Ps 118:105]. It is like a stimulus in order to make us run carefree along the path of virtue.

Otherwise, the Prince of Darkness, our infernal enemy, who remains every day at our side, and is engaged in pondering and presenting himself under a thousand disguises to our harm for our eternal ruin – or, at least, to impede us from making any advance along the way of perfection. Unfortunately, he also seeks to bring it about that even this means – that in and of itself is so efficacious - might lose its force and become for us, if not just useless, at least, that it be of little advantage, as just a routine to fulfill, or that we show up just out of habit, to observe an external ritual – and perhaps even as a brief relief from the hard studies or work of the day, without any real desire to draw only very little fruit from them.

And in the first place, the Demon brings it about that the exhortations a little at a time, come across as something ordinary and that we come to them merely out of habit, to fulfill a ritual, or perhaps derive some relief from our challenging studies or hard work, without any vibrant desire to get something out of them. But, it should not be this way.

---

<sup>26</sup> Part IV, *Concerning Progress*, Chapter I – *Concerning Spiritual Progress* - n. 1 – CF # 47.

Let us think – with Rodriguez<sup>27</sup> - how the ancient monks would approach this ancient exercise: with what desires and even yearning, they would approach this whenever they would assemble for those spiritual *collationes* or conferences that they delivered among themselves! And what good provisions they would take away from them in order to ruminate on them in their cells. Now, with such desires and yearning we, too, ought to participate in these Domestic Exhortations and Conferences, and then they will indeed bear fruit in us. Food consumed with a good appetite is a sign of health and of a good bodily disposition. To experience nausea is a sign of illness. Let us go to them at least in order to hear God spoken about: *He that is of God, hears the words of God. Therefore, you hear them not, because you are not of God...* [cf. Jn 8:47].

Another strategem of the Demon is to convince one that in these Exhortations, one hears only the usual and ordinary things, that are already well known. Do you see how the Prince of Darkness deceives us? Why are these Domestic Exhortations considered to be ordinary? Why are they given anyway? You know that Domestic Exhortations are not organized so much to present new and extraordinary truths, those that are elegant and rather curious. They are given for no other purpose than to bring back to our memories those common and ordinary matters that we have before us each day, and for increase our fervor regarding them. And it is with this presupposition that we ought to go to them, and to listen to them.

And so I ask: Do we keep these ordinary matters before our minds at all times? Do we practice them, observe them? Therefore, how is it, then, that we can go to listen to these truths unwillingly that are so necessary for us? And how is it, in spite of having heard them repeated so many times, why have we not yet brought them all into execution? If, after hearing these same matters repeated time and time again, we are still lacking in their observance, what would be our situation if there were not those who would remind us of these and every once in a while tried to inspire us to live them better? The living voice of one who speaks to us in the name of God, and of the Superior, is more valuable than reading us: as the natural water from the sky is more valuable than running water.

The Demon seeks to impede us from deriving that fruit from this exercise also by having us apply whatever is said to others, rather than to ourselves. The beam in our own eyes, and the speck in the eyes of others! It is true that when one speaks of a defect it does not always mean that this is a part of our own household – but, there are times when faults are brought up as a precaution and to take care to avoid it: *before sickness, take the medicine!* [cf. Si 18:20] – this is so that it will never come to us!

In like manner, the one who delivers the Domestic Exhortation should never have anyone in particular in mind - and so, too, the one who listens should never think that the discourse should be applied to others, but always to oneself. Each and everyone, my brothers, ought to apply to himself all that is said. What sense would it make to have all succulent foods placed on the table, and you were all seated around it, if you do not

---

<sup>27</sup> Part I, Treatise I, c. 18.

reach out for a morsel to put it into your mouths? What would it matter if one has the medicine before him, and does not make use of it? Of what use would balm be unless it is applied to one's own wound, without his applying it to what he perceives to be someone else's?

For example, in the Exhortation it is said that we have not come to religion to do our own will, but rather that of Someone else – we know that the religious life is a life of abnegation, of sacrifice, of penance: and then, once we get here, we want to do everything in accord with our own life-style we look for our own comforts, we do not wish to undergo anything, to suffer anything. What we need to produce are deeds, and not just words! And let us strive to keep it in mind, especially anything that might make the deepest impression upon us. And let us think of it as a kind of warning from God for our own spiritual well-being. Let us hope that all that is said would not go in one ear, and then right out the other – and then just as soon as the Domestic Exhortation has been concluded, we remain *like an erased black board*, and the birds – rather, the Devil – take our grain away.

Therefore, when the Domestic Exhortation has ended, we need some time for recollection. That Rule that is found in some religious communities<sup>28</sup> is an excellent one that after the conclusion of the Domestic Exhortation, the Novices ought to remain for a half hour in order to reflect, and to ponder over what has been said. I do not intend to oblige you to do this, but my appeal is that at least you do not allow the thoughts to fall into oblivion or forgetfulness, and that during recreations there never comes up a single idea from the many that have been heard. Or, what would not be good, if one companion sought to bring up one point or another, his companions would not be open to him, and would allow his points to fall, without accompanying his view – I would hope that nothing of this sort would ever happen.

Therefore, what would become of us if in the exhortations we allow ourselves to remain distracted, by thinking of other things, or about our study, or our tasks, and the like, even though with our body we might appear quiet and attentive? It is necessary to listen with attention and to come to some practical resolve: *But, be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*. [Jas 1:22]. Let us keep in mind that we will have to render an account to the Lord for every exhortation, and indeed for every word that we hear. Let us also remember that people in the world do not have this grace, and that therefore *unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required*. [Lk 12:48].

In brief, my brothers, let us listen to this Word of God with an authentic religious spirit, with a spirit of humility, recognizing that we have great need of it. Let us listen with a spirit of compunction, of love, of generosity, with genuine commitment – and in this way, we will derive the desired fruit and we will give joy to the Lord and we will move ahead in virtue.

---

<sup>28</sup> Fr. Lenotti, like the Founder himself did so often, taps in here to the Ignatian tradition. Fr. Lenotti is making use here of the old Jesuit *Rules for the Master of Novices*, but he did not mention the 'space of one half hour' found in the Ignatian rule.

## II. WHAT A RELIGIOUS IS IN GENERAL, AND WHAT IS A RELIGIOUS IN OUR CONGREGATION

**He is a man who totally abandons himself for the service of God and his own salvation – He is one totally committed to the exercise of the virtues – He is one who seeks the divine will and the good pleasure of Jesus Christ, his Model – He is dead to the world, and therefore, blessed- In particular, the Stigmatine is a religious soldier – He needs a spirit of sacrifice, generosity, zeal.**

Just as an artist <sup>29</sup>who ought to produce a painting, or a portrait, or one would make a small model of a work to be produced, as it is sometimes called, in order to then transfer this onto the screen. Or, some would draw up a rough outline in order then to finish it, or to perfect it as the subsequent parts unfold <sup>30</sup>. And so, allow me, my beloved brothers, that I – before coming to explain part by part the various rules that the Lord has given to us through the pen of our saintly Founder – might put together here before you, as a kind of outline and a sketch, the model of that religious life that these Constitutions present to us. Why, then, are these rules important? The reason for them is to form by means of them an authentic religious and an **Apostolic Missionary**. Let us see, then what a Religious is meant to be in a general way; and what a religious should be in our Congregation.

First of all, what is a religious? A Religious, of any Religious Congregation, or Monastery, is a man who has been called by God, has turned his back on the world, and has given himself over entirely to God's service, in order to put his soul in security. A Religious is a man who, in order to obey God's voice in order to save himself, has the courage of leaving behind father and mother, relatives and friends, his own comforts and ease in life, honors and riches and whatever the world has that is desirable, and chooses to hasten in order to place himself into the hands of obedience, and under the sweet yoke of a Rule, in order to have thereby a more sure means for his own eternal salvation.

What, then, is a Religious? He is a man released from every earthly concern, a man crucified to this world; he is a man who has to undertake the struggle against his own passions, one who needs to flee even the smallest defects, in order to practice virtue. In brief, he is one set on the way to acquire perfection. *Therefore, good brother, do not be slack, in so far as you can, in insisting upon good deeds: attend only to this, that you have become a monk, and therefore do what monks do!* <sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>29</sup> The world of art was also one employed among his examples by Fr. Bertoni – cf. *Memoriale Privato*, February 26, 1809 – *we need to make a portrait within ourselves of Jesus Christ*; CF ## 223: *admire the beautiful colors the Holy Spirit has used in painting our gifted confreres* – from Suarez, p. 955 a. [This Constitution was quote by Pope John Paul II, when he received our General Chapter in Audience, in February 2000]

<sup>30</sup> This almost seems to be Fr. Lenotti's description of Fr. Bertoni's *Compendium Rude*, CF ## 1-8.

<sup>31</sup> This Latin quote is from the Book, *On the Manner of living well* - c. 8 – but, the citation is not exact.

What, then, is a Religious? He is a man for whom mortification is like the salt that flavors all his actions, so that they might be pleasing to God: he is a man who flees laziness, and who loves fatigue; he is a man of penance, one who does not seek his own comforts, his own ease, who is convinced that he has not come to Religion in order to have everything that is pleasing to him, but one who has come in order to suffer for Jesus Christ; he is a man of patience, who puts up with those privations, which in every state of human life whatsoever, even that of a king or monarch, these are found everywhere in this vale of tears: *patience is necessary for you!* [cf. Heb 10:36]. And if this is necessary for the poorest peasant and farmer, as it is for the most august monarch, is necessary also for a man in the state of religion, because suffering is found just everywhere. A Religious, then, is a man who has sacrificed to God his own will and his own freedom, in order to enjoy that freedom of the children of God: this is the sacrifice, the most acceptable to God that can be found.

The religious man, then, is a person who seeks always the divine will, and the good pleasure of God: in order to bring joy to Jesus Christ, the religious endures fatigue; in order to please Jesus Christ, the religious practices mortification in good, sleep, illness; and so, he is one who values prosperity as adversity and directs all toward the service of God, receives all from His hands, as resigned to the Divine Good Pleasure. The Religious is one who in order to please Jesus Christ exercises charity toward his brothers. He is a man who draws close to God; he is poor for Jesus Christ, and thus offers his vow of Poverty; he is one who is chaste for Jesus Christ, and offers Him his vow of Chastity; and yet, this Religious is a person who is always animated by hope founded on God, and which will never fail him: *And everyone who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting* [cf. Mt 19:29].

In brief, a Religious is a man dead to this world, and therefore blessed: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...for their works follow them* [cf. Rv 14:13]. So, this is what a Religious is, and what each Religious man ought to seek in each and every religious family: and this is what we should be, too. In fact, this is the end that we proposed to ourselves in entering and the reason why we came here: and that is to attend to the interest of our own salvation, to do penance for our own sins, and to struggle hard to become perfect. Let us compare ourselves with that model: by the grace of God, we have to thank God that the spirit of humility, of mortification, of patience, and obedience, etc., that we do find in our own House. However, whatever is lacking is what we need to procure: not a great deal more is needed: a bit more prayer, a bit more humility, and so on, and we will obtain our purposes.

But coming now in particular to our own Congregation, what is, and what should a Religious of this Congregation be – even though it is so small – yet, it is a work coming from the hand of God? What should an Apostolic Missionary be?

He ought to be not only a religious, but a religious-soldier; and moreover, he should have the spirit of a soldier: a valiant and faithful soldier, animated by the spirit of

sacrifice, a spirit of generosity, a spirit of zeal, for the glory of his King and for the good of the republic.

Such, my brothers, ought to be the spirit which animates us in his Congregation. A spirit that is first of all, one of sacrifice, for which the soldier suffers fatigue, journeys, hunger, cold, and the like. A Missionary who is in love with himself, and with his own comforts, with concerns for his own bodily welfare; a Missionary who is excessively delicate, a Missionary who would never want to endure any suffering, for whom suffering remains a barbaric and savage language – what kind of Missionary could such a person ever be?

There is needed a spirit of generosity: the soldier offers himself being ready to remain at his post, whether in the camp, or in the field, and to overcome the obstacles and to meet head-on the hostile swords and blows. This is what the Missionary is, one who is not afraid of dangers, who has no fear of hard work when it is a matter of rendering oneself an apt instrument of the Divine Glory and for the good of souls. He needs to be one who is *ready for all*<sup>32</sup>. The Missionary needs to be ready to overcome obstacles, and one for whom every recollection and contrast or misfortune is never able to defeat him, to discourage him. The Missionary in this sense is one who conquers all – he has a great heart which is precisely one that makes even the Devil afraid.

He needs a spirit of zeal: the soldier would face death for his home-land, and for his king. So, the Missionary ought to have zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls with good example, and with prayer, which is worth more than a thousand words, and with **studying to make himself an able instrument**<sup>33</sup>. The soldier is not alive to his profession only when he is already on the field of combat, all readied for the battle to ensue – but, he remains a soldier when he bivouacs in his quarters, or, on the Parade Ground<sup>34</sup> in order to manage his weapons and to prepare himself for any eventuality. So, we Missionaries are this not only when we exercise ourselves in **our ministries in the battle field, i.e., in the pulpits for the Missions, or in the Confessional, or at the lectern in the parishes**<sup>35</sup> – but, also when we remain at home to purify ourselves from our sins, to render us suitable for our *ministries* with study, and with the practice of virtue, and the like.

---

<sup>32</sup> This is the slogan attributed to Fr. Marani. It has a biblical background: *And the king opened his treasury, and gave out the pay to the army for a year: and he commanded them that they should be ready for all things* [1 M 3:28] – *Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word, to be ready for every good work*. The saying applies well to the *varia et propria munera vocationis suae*, which Fr. Bertoni notes in his **CF # 185**.

<sup>33</sup> Fr. Bertoni insisted much on knowledge that was not ordinary, not mediocre – cf. e.g., **CF ## 49, 50, 159**.

<sup>34</sup> Fr. Lenotti speaks here of the *Campo di Marte* - interestingly enough also the address of the location of Fr. Bertoni's home parish, *S. Paolo in Campo Marte*.

<sup>35</sup> As will be seen a bit further ahead, Fr. Lenotti seems to have a broad view of the **Apostolic Mission**, simply in his listing of the different aspects of it. St. Ignatius provides three lists for the various and proper ministries to which the Society is committed: in his *Formula # 3; Part IV: c. 8, nn. 400-414; Part VII, nn. 637-653*. For Fr. Bertoni, he provides a broad list in his **Part IX of his Constitutions, ## 158-186**.

Therefore, let us strive to have this spirit of sacrifice, of generosity and zeal. And let us do all that we can from our part. Let us offer, with the Widow of the Gospel, the two mites [cf. Mk 12:42]: while those who had the great establishments and extended properties offer great things: as for us, let us offer that which we can. And the Lord who looked at the heart of that widow, will also look at our heart and will accept what we offer.

Mary and Joseph wait to see... from us: and let us heed their expectancy, let us correspond to their desires.

---

### III. CONCERNING THE OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES

**We are Soldiers of Christ- The regular Disciple - The Rules serve as the break-water for the Law of God and the help to observe it – Diligence in minute observances - From these come perfection and predestination – the example of St Leonard of Port Maurice – Exhortation.**

*Labor as a good soldier of Christ Jesus* [2 Tm 2:3], the Apostle wrote: endure fatigue, travail, hard work, fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. As we saw the last time, we ought to be missionary-soldiers: so, we ought to think as addressed in a special way to us those words: *labor as good soldiers of Christ*: work hard, endure fatigue, travail, fight as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And even if some one is mixed in the company who is deceived, down-hearted, and defeated, and who turns his back and deserts his company, goes out from his squadron – then, all the more ought we to go ahead as generous men, as strong in the committed militia and in the battle, to accept fatigue, to fight on in the interests of our soul, for the souls of our neighbors, and more than anything else for the Lord of the Lord: *...set up a wall for the House of Israel...* [cf. Ezk 13:5] – following the counsels of the Apostle: *Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called* [cf. 1 Co 7:20]. Let us not lose courage, since the Lord is with us: *If God be for us, who is against us?* [cf. Rm 8:31].

Since it is indispensable for the soldier, and his most strict duty, to accept military discipline, its observance is rigorously demanded and with supreme severity it must be fulfilled. An undisciplined army cannot fight with any realistic hope, it cannot bring honor to its prince, and it cannot obtain victory and triumph.

And so, my brothers, this is the way it is with us. Religious discipline is absolutely necessary to give glory to God and to be able to fight his battles. And there is no doubt that a Congregation that is well ordered, by the observance of its rules is turned into a terrible array against the spirit of the world and the devil, it is like a *terrible as an army set in array* [cf. CT 6:3, 9]. Now, this discipline is determined for us precisely, directed and is maintained by the rules, without the observance of which one is not an authentic religious.

The rules, my beloved brothers, are – according to Rodriguez - like ‘a rampart for a city: because just as a city is better protected when it has not only a wall, but also a rampart...so, God has granted this grace to religious communities: He has girded us and armed us first of all with a very strong wall of His Law and His Commandments. And in addition to this, then, He has also provided another wall, or rampart, viz., with the Rules and Constitutions of the Religious Community. And thus, when we are assailed by our enemies – which they bring about us as the battle continues – the most they can do is to break down and leave on the ground only a part of this rampart. However, the principal wall of God’s Law and Commandments remains always intact, and we are saved.’

‘Religious communities have even more than this rampart with the rules and evangelical counsels, which greatly help to keep the commandments of the law of God.

And so for anyone who might make Religious Profession to observe the perfect of the Counsels succeeds very easily in the observance of the Commandments: and on the contrary, anyone who chooses not to observe the Counsels, nor attend to his perfection, only with great difficulty will he observe the Commandments of God. Thus, the Saints note that the rules and Counsels that we profess in the religious state are not a burden, but rather a help, in order to bear better the weight of God's Commandments.' Therefore, the Rules are not burdensome, because they may be compared to wings of birds enabling one to fly – provide legs as for the animals of the earth to walk. Rather, they render the religious who faithfully observes them a happy and content man: because where there is order, there is also peace.

Let us guard ourselves from that diabolic temptation of neglecting some of these as of no consequence, as mere *minutiae*. Just confer St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori's, *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, where he states: 'he would convince us to pay little heed to them. All the rules ought to be considered as something important, also because all are ordered by God and approved by the Church as a means of religious perfection, to which all persons consecrated to God ought to aspire continually. This is because the lack of observance of the Rules [even of the small ones] put in disorder the whole religious Community and the entire Community. It is certain that in that monastery where the little matters are carefully attended to, fervor reigns. However, where these matters are not held as important, the spirit is either already lost, or little by little it is becoming lost, and will eventually be totally lost.'

From such observance are united one's perfection and predestination: just confer, *True Spouse*. St. Francis de Sales offered this grand principle: *the pre-destination of religious souls is bound up with the observance of their rules*. And St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi used to say that the observance of the rules is the most direct path to eternal salvation and holiness... The Holy Spirit states: those who hold discipline in no account [i.e., their rules] are unhappy, and hope in vain in their fatigue, since their efforts will remain without fruit.'

How meritorious these matters are! And then, do we not all have so many debts to pay to satisfy God? And what has He not done for us? And where are we?

Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice retained in his own high esteem, and kept careful vigil, not to fail even in some minimal prescription, concerning that which pertains to the common observance. He was accustomed to saying that particular prayers and the other exercises of devotion and of piety and of mortification that were customarily done by religious beyond what the rules demanded, are all good things. However, for Communities, the best of all, and the most necessary to do well, and from which never to dispense oneself, but to follow perfectly always, would be that of observing exactly all that one's own religious community prescribes. He was, therefore, most exact in carrying out with all solicitude and diligence whatever is contained in the rules and whatever is commanded in the Constitutions of his own community. And no matter how small certain matters might be, the fervent spirit of Father Leonard never refused them as such. Rather he would always say to his companions, exhorting them to

be exact in the good customs of religion: ‘Whatever might be pleasing or displeasing before the eyes of God does not merit the name of something minimal.’ Other maxims he used to share with his co-disciples: ‘If now that we are young, we do not take into consideration even the minor matters [ he shared this while he was still a student] and we fall advertently into light transgressions, this will mean that when we will more advanced and when we will have greater freedom, we will make light of the big failures, and we will have little regard from falling into major transgressions’ [cf. his *Life*, c. 3].

For St. Lawrence Justinian, the ordinary maxim was that a religious should tremble in the presence of the least transgression.

And so, my brothers, before we go over these matters one by one, also this year, let us strive to observe our principle requirements in an outstanding way- these would be meditation made with the proper additions, as regards duration and diligence, each day with a new sense of commitment, without ever being discouraged. The same goes for the Mass; the particular examen on our principal defect, and the like, on our confrontations. And for this, let us ask the help of the Spiritual Father. Let us reflect on our modesty, particularly that of the eyes, our poverty in asking permissions, and our obedience at the first sound of the bell – and all these matters.

Let us band together, much like when soldiers come to line up for a march. And remember that God *will save a humble people*. [cf. Ps 17:28].



IV.  
*COMPENDIUM RUDE*

1. The Objective of this Community is to be: Apostolic Missionaries for the service of Bishops.

2. The Manner of Achieving this Goal: [the Apostolic Missionaries are] *to work under the direction of, and dependent on the Ordinaries of those places in which the Missions may be offered. The Missionaries are to be totally submissive to these Bishops, concerning all that pertains to the exercise of their Apostolic endeavor. The Missionaries are to receive beforehand from them their permission, along with the necessary faculties, always observing the guide-lines set down by these Ordinaries concerning the places and the time in the exercise of their apostolate. [From the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation, December 20, 1817].*

3. Weapons: The Divine Word and Prayer

The End – The Manner: As the Company of Jesus is with regard to the Pope, we are we towards the Bishops, without binding ourselves by vow to individual Bishops. – *Prepared for all* - The Weapons: the sword of the Word of God and the armament of Prayer. The saying of Fr. Carafa – Exhortation.

Beginning to read our *Original Constitutions*, we read that which our Saintly Founder puts at the forefront.

It is seen clearly that Fr. Bertoni's intention would have to have been that of instituting a Congregation, which like the Company of Jesus is in a special manner dedicated, directed toward the assistance and the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff, would be that of being dedicated and determined in a very special and outstanding manner to the service of Bishops: however, with this difference, that while the professed of the Company of Jesus make a Vow of Obedience to the Pope, our Members do not make the Vow of Obedience to the Bishop, but seek in every way that they can, to help him, to assist him obsequiously, in a particular manner to be dedicated to him. Since it is one matter to vow oneself to the Pope who has the administration of the entire Catholic Church, it is another to be committed to a Bishop in this way. For, by dedicating oneself to a single diocese would mean to restrict also the sphere of our ministry. We would then be *Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of a Bishop*, and not of the *Bishops*: indeed a single Bishop could, in such a case, by sending us here and there, now one confrere, and then another, this would destroy us and consume us. This, then, is the essence of our Institute, its end and the manner of obtaining it<sup>36</sup>.

---

<sup>36</sup> This is a very important text: the model for Fr. Bertoni's *Compendium Rude* seems to have been the *Formula* of the Society of Jesus. The nine numbers of this *Formula*, contain 'Five Chapters', perhaps the original Ignatian jotting: 1. the **End** of the Company and its Fundamental Regimen; 2. The **Special Obedience** to the Supreme Pontiff; 3. **Obedience within the Company**; 4. The **Poverty** of the Company; 5. **Miscellaneous** : no specific habit; no service in Choir, etc. Fr. Lenotti's emphasis in this comparison he makes is the special obedience the Stigmatine owed to Bishops [in the plural]. This is the *Stigmatine Modus* - there is an interesting study on the Ignatian *Modus* : *Appunti di Spiritualita'* 12. *El modo nuestro de proceder – il nostro modo d'agire*. [Conference of Fr. General, January 18, 1979. Fr. Stofella has noted that the Founder's CF # 185 articulates the headings left as incomplete sentences in the *Compendium Rude*. It seems that for Fr. Leonotti the essence of the Stigmatine Community is this qualified *obsequium* – service of the Bishops.

This is a great commitment, as you see well as well as the excellence of this end: **to serve**<sup>37</sup> **the Bishops, whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God** [cf. Ac 20:28]. We are called to be the successors of the Apostles, and companions of all Missionaries dispersed<sup>38</sup> all over the world.

But, as we have said other times, we have to be Missionary-Soldiers, **disposed for anything: *parati ad omnia!***<sup>39</sup>. We are called to proceed through the level paths as well as through the steep ascents, we are soldiers in peace as well as at war, in prosperity as well as in adversity and tribulations. We are called, in all of the above, to remain firm at our post, and to defend ourselves from the enemies and to wage combat in the wars of the Lord. Therefore, for this we need weapons.

The principal weapons of the Missionary are two: the Sword of the Divine Word and the Sword of Prayer.

The Sword of the Divine Word: ***the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of god*** [cf. Ep 6:17]. This is that sword, that is more penetrating than an other sword with two cutting edges: ***for the Word of God is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword*** [cf. Heb 4:2], which penetrates even to the most intimate part of the soul, and wounds and conquers. And this, my brothers, it is necessary to learn to handle well, with studies and with holy lectures, and to use it well, according to the circumstances: **in the confessional, in the prisons, in the pulpit, on the platform, from the altars, in the Exercises, Missions, Oratories, Retreats, familiar conversation, etc.**<sup>40</sup>, animating it with the Spirit of the Lord, Who always ought to be in

---

<sup>37</sup> It may be of some interest to note the Fr. Lenotti renders *in obsequium*, as **to serve**[cf. also **CF # 3**]: St. Ignatius wrote his Constitutions in Spanish, and the words; *servir, servicio, servo* recur over 1,000 times. In translating these Constitutions into Latin, the faithful Secretary of St. Ignatius, Fr. Polanco, varied between *servitium* – *auxilium* and *obsequium*. It seems that Ignatius was moved by the **Servant of the Lord**, that **Christ had come to serve, not to be served** : cf. **Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Jn 12:26**.

<sup>38</sup> This is Fr. Bertoni's geographical abandonment, ***quocumque in dioecesi et mundo!*** [cf. **CF # 5**.

<sup>39</sup> This is Fr. Marani's oft-repeated motto – and it is interesting to see Fr. Lenotti using it here in a very **broad** application of the various services to which the Community is committed in the Apostolic Mission – the priestly services very often appear in the plural: ***actions; labores; media; varia et propria ministeria; missiones; munera; opera***.

<sup>40</sup> **Etc.!!** – once more **Missions** appear as one part of a list, and not even mentioned first here – Fr. Bertoni offers his list in his **Part IX [cf. ## 158-186]** of the Constitutions, where he develops in 7 Chapters the ***varia et propria ministeria*** of our Apostolic Mission. St. Ignatius has three separate lists for his ***quodcumque Verbi Dei ministerium*** : ***Formula # 3; Part IV, c. 8, nn. 400-414; Part VII, nn. 637-654***. The discernment to judge which aspect of these varied and proper ministries' of the Apostolic Mission is the law of ***magis***, what is more needed, good, universal, the greater glory of God, the larger number of needs [cf. **CSJ nn. 622, ff.**]. It is hard to understand what is sometimes referred to the Stigmatine lists from the pen of the Founder as a ***genericita' rischiosa***. St. Gaspar's well remembered visit to the Altar of St. Ignatius [MP, September 15, 1808], speaks of promoting the Glory of God ***by the same paths, even thought not in all those manners*** [the word here is ***modi*** ] ***that he was able to employ....***"Fr. Bertoni also uses here the image of the Word of God as a sword. The Jesuits have a broad spectrum of possible apostolic services – this seems to be the parallel Fr. Lenotti is drawing.

our hearts, so that the inflamed Word might proceed to move and to enkindle the hearts of the faithful.

The other weapon, the other sword is prayer. My brothers, this is what I really want to reaffirm: that we might fix well into our minds the great need we have of prayer and that we would give ourselves over to it with great fervor.

Prayer, as you know, is that canal through which the Lord has determined to give us his graces: prayer is that means which, even alone, obtains all: ***and being but one, she can do all things***<sup>41</sup>: prayer is the key to God's treasures. It brings a sweet violence to God's heart.

Prayer unites us with God, it fills us with courage, with lights, with strength. What good can we do, both for ourselves as well as for others, if the Lord does not endow us with His help and grace? Our words would be gone with the wind. It was a familiar saying of Fr. Vincent Caraffa that to convert souls, *a good person of prayer is more suited than a most accomplished orator*. He used to call prayer *the proper task in leisure, and the real leisure for one's tasks*.

The Moabites and the Ammonites were congregated against Josaphat, the King of Juda. He did not lose heart, but had recourse to God with all his heart., with his people and his children. They went into battle not with the sound of trumpets and drums to excite the soldiers, but with the Canticle of Praise for the Lord. And God brought it about that the enemies would kill each other among themselves, and none escaped from death. So, the soldiers of Josaphat had no other task other for three whole days than carrying off the very rich spoils. And so, still singing their praises to the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem<sup>42</sup>.

So, my brothers, prayer is so necessary to fulfill the scope of our vocation. Let us pray much for our brothers are on the Mission<sup>43</sup>, and more for the increase and progress of our Congregation. Prayer is our ***refuge from the trouble which has encompassed us*** [cf. Ps 31:7]. Let us pray much, then, let us trust in god, and He will not fail to bring us help in our needs: ***He flew on the wings of the wind*** [cf. Ps 17:11]: thus, God flies to respond to whomsoever prays to Him: ***I have called upon You... and You have heard me...*** [cf. Ps 85:7]<sup>44</sup>: ***no one has hoped in the Lord and has been confounded...*** [cf. Si 2:11].

---

<sup>41</sup> cf. Ws 7:27 – here this text on the fruits of Divine Wisdom is accommodated to Prayer.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. 2 Ch 20:1-30.

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting that Fr. Lenotti has left this word in the singular – in many communities, to be 'on the Mission, means the men are carrying out their Apostolic tasks for the Lord. The allusion here is to our Stigmatine **Apostolic Mission**.

<sup>44</sup> Fr. Lenotti has made an accommodated use of this verse: *I have called upon You in the day of my trouble: because You have heard me*. It is close to Ps 4:2: *When I called upon Him...God heard my prayer...*

V.  
**WITH TOTAL GRATUITY, THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY WILL  
SERVE GOD AND THE CHURCH [CF # 3].**

**The gratuitous service of the observant Missionaries – The Example of the Son of God -  
Serve God and the Church, our neighbors – The example of St. Ignatius – the Founder  
and Fr. Marani – Exhortation.**

Right here, my beloved brothers, we have one of the more essential, and fundamental<sup>45</sup> rules of our Institute: to serve God and the Church, and all for no remuneration: *gratis* .

In the first place, we are Missionaries-Soldiers, as we saw another time. However, precisely because we are soldiers, we have to serve<sup>46</sup>. The soldier ought to serve God, our King; Jesus Christ, our Captain and Leader; the Church, our Christian Homeland. We are not, therefore Missionaries to command, but to serve: let us keep this uppermost in mind, my brothers. *The disciple is not above his master, nor is the servant above his lord* [cf. Lk 6:40]. Also the Son of God, the Head of all Missionaries, *is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister* [cf. Mt 20:26], *taking the form of a servant* [cf. Ph 2:7] – he served for 30 years in a work shop; He served in His **preaching** even to the washing of the feet of His Apostles; and He served His Divine Father and human beings and serves also now in the Most Blessed Sacrament, humbling Himself under the species of bread. Thus, the Missionaries and apostolic men, in order to be ready for the needs of our neighbors, *become all things for all, that we might save all for Christ*. [cf. 1 Co 9:22]. Let us not withdraw from **hearing confessions, from distributing Holy Communion, from preaching, instructing, administering the Sacraments and WHATEVER ministry God would will**<sup>47</sup>. We are **Missionaries**, but **Servants**. Let us not have any repugnance, and the like: let us serve also under the weight of fatigue and tribulation.

And first of all, let us serve God and the Church: to please Him, seeking not to disgust Him with our defects, attending to our perfection, with the mortification of ourselves, with patience and with the observance of the vows and of the Rules.

---

<sup>45</sup> Fr. Lenotti makes a broader use of the word *essential* - perhaps here in parallel with the word **fundamental**. An early General Chapter, responding to Fr. Vicentini [cf. **IXth and Xth General Chapters**] , declared that the *Compendium Rude* contained the “**Fundamental Rules**” of the *Original Constitutions*.

<sup>46</sup> As has been noted, St. Ignatius was blessed with a *Mysticism of Service*. In writing his Constitutions originally in Spanish, Fr. Polanco in putting them into Latin used three separate words: *servir – auxiliari – obsequi*, the latter becoming Fr. Bertoni’s favorite. The under-lying emphasis can be the **Servant** of the Lord. [cf. also **CF # 3**]

<sup>47</sup> And once again, Fr. Lenotti offers a list – here he seems to be alluding to the *quodcumque Verbi Dei Ministerium* in St. Ignatius’ *Formula 1* – and in Fr. Bertoni’s **CF # 162**, under the *Means by which this Institute promotes the Salvation of our Neighbors: Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium!*

And we are to serve the Church: our neighbors with prayer, good example, **studies**<sup>48</sup>, preaching, etc. What an honor this is, what glory is this not for us! And what excellence is there not required for all this!

And we are called to serve *gratuitously*. What kind of a soldier are we meant to be? *Who serves as a soldier at any time at his own charges* [cf. 1 Co 9:7] – no, *gratuitously*. The stipend in the other world will be all the greater.

What has Jesus Christ done? All was *gratuitous*, even in behalf of His enemies. The Apostles did everything *gratuitously*: rather, St. Paul labored for his own livelihood, etc. We too serve without remuneration. As the saints have also done.

The lack of self-interest serves as a great magnet to draw hearts to God. This lack of self-interest also enchants human beings who are so drawn to self-interest and personal gain. Especially in our own times in which no one does anything for nothing. The lack of personal self-interest enchants our neighbors, and is experienced in the Missions: they can never make an complaint.

This was the situation of St. Ignatius and his companions on the Day of the Assumption when they took their vows. They obliged themselves not to demand anything from their work in order to remain free in their ministry. They were also able to stop the criticism of the Lutherans, who accused the ministers of God from dispensing holy realities in order to enrich themselves.

And this is what we are challenged to be. The Lord gave to our venerated Founder this spirit of a lack of self-interest. And he rigorously observed it, being faithful even to the point of being scrupulous. He refused gifts, inheritances, and the like, and the same spirit is evident in our present Father Prepositus: nothing *for any ministry, in response to the work that has been offered*. Let us thank the Lord that all the less that we receive from our fellow human beings, then, all the more will we receive from God.

So, let us be inspired by this Constitution, to serve the Lord courageously. Let us be humble toward all, because we are their servants: but, together let us always have the great esteem for our vocation and not be afraid: because who knows what are the plans of God upon us, and our Congregation? His Providence, if we are faithful, will lead us towards the execution of His most holy and most sweet will.

---

<sup>48</sup> For the varied Apostolic Mission [*per varia et propria ministerial* - CF # 185] there is needed particularly a **more than ordinary knowledge**, one that is not mediocre, but capable of illumine minds, which are in darkness; resist heresies; **to explain the reasons for the faith**; to resolve moral questions, to satisfy all in any theological doctrine. Due to the *obsequium*, perhaps in union with **LG # 25, the Stigmatine theologian is called also to assist the Magisterium in explaining its reasons for its teaching, documents.**

## VI.

**4. THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES ARE TO REMAIN IMMUNE FROM ALL DIGNITIES, RESIDENCES, BENEFICES, AND THE PERPETUAL AND PARTICULAR CARE OF SOULS.**

**5. THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES ARE TO BE READY TO GO ANYWHERE IN THE DIOCESE AND THE WORLD.**

**They are to remain immune from all dignities, etc. – to avoid pride and in defense of humility – In defense of the religious spirit – A heart as great as the world.**

The Rule that our Founder has placed in our Congregation is this: to be really immune from dignities, residences, benefices and the perpetual and particular care of souls and of religious sisters and nuns: this is a rule that shuts off any approach to ambition, to vanity and to other inconveniences to our way of life.

Regarding residences, this would mean that a member would come to be absent for long periods of times, and even perpetually from the Congregation, with great harm to himself and to the Institute. In addition to the fact that the better and more suitable individuals in this manner would be taken from the Congregation which would become despoiled of them.

There are three very beautiful reasons in support of this Rule that our venerated Founder took from St. Ignatius, and which is both so fitting and necessary for our Institute.

1. In the first place, our Founder wanted to root us well in humility, and to keep always immersed in it: therefore, the confreres are to be *immune from dignities, etc.*, as Jesus put it to His own Apostles: *I saw Satan, like lightning, falling from heaven* [cf. Lk 10:18]. The Lord makes use of the humble: *He looks down on the low things* [cf. Ps 112:6; cf. Also 138:6], and *He resists the proud* [cf. Jas 4:6]. Pride is the most fatal moth of Congregations. Therefore, also St. Vincent de Paul recommended humility so much to his own sons, and humility in each and every individual because the Congregation is composed of individuals. If the individuals are always humble, then so will the Congregation be. Pride brought confusion to the Tower of Babel; and so proud would bring this confusion into the Congregation with ambition, and would eventually impede the building up of it, because *unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*. [cf. Ps 126:1]. Humility, my brothers, will be our defense against the blows of the adversary while humility is the foundation of our perfection, humility will protect us in that very little we have accomplished up to the present and will increase this. Therefore, my brothers, let us love humiliation. Let us not yearn from dignities – let us respect the religious of other communities, holding ourselves to be the least of all, and we are indeed the least, the very last of all. If we provide for ourselves a deep root of humility, do not entertain any doubts that the tree will grow.

2. The second reason is to maintain always in us the religious spirit. If we should ever have to spend long stretches of time working, outside of the Congregation, outside

the surveillance of the Superiors, of the example of our brothers and of the regular discipline – dissipation, distraction little by little would filter into our hearts. And just think of the harm: even to the point of being able to lose one's vocation, as has happened sometimes in our Congregation.

So, since even in the work of the Missions, it is necessary to intersperse these with those returns into the Congregation, there is thus maintained the religious spirit of poverty, of obedience, etc. Unfortunately, how many religious are ruined and lost with their remaining too long far from their Superiors! Therefore, Jesus Christ said to His Apostles: *Come apart into a desert place and rest a little* [cf. Mk 6:31].

3. The third reason is to keep for the Congregation her better subjects: this is something that is most important, especially for its government. In order to honor residences, these men would come to be away for long stretches of time, and taken from the community.

\*\*\*

The Founder instead, added on another of the rules to this, corresponding to the preceding: *The Apostolic Missionaries are to be ready to go anywhere in the Diocese and the world.*

We were not made to remain still, but we need to be ready as soldiers are, and disposed to help out everywhere, and not in anyone diocese, and also throughout the world. The reason for this, if any one of our men would be of the opinion that there is already plenty to do in our own city and diocese, without going about and spreading ourselves and distending ourselves also into other areas, they would show quite clearly that they do not have the spirit of our Institute.

Therefore, there is needed a heart as broad as the world! And it is now pleasing to the Lord to keep us limited and humbled. But, beyond this, He has given us the grace to help out in various dioceses. We hope that when the opportune time will come, established by Providence, that He will also grant us the grace to grow. His plans for this Congregation we do not know them. We must in the meantime have much courage in our hearts and to be very generous, and to entrust ourselves to God: if we are not found lacking, God certainly will never fail. But, if we wish to be disposed to go anywhere in the world, it is necessary that we begin to be indifferent regarding our rooms, clothing, food, our trips, and in everything.

---

## VII. COMMON LIFE

**What is intended by this – The sons of St. Philip – Common life in heaven and in the beginnings of the Church – Source of Peace and love for God, and of example for our neighbors – Is perfection – Pius IX and the Father Prepositus – Exhortation.**

Another means <sup>49</sup> which our venerated Founder prescribed for us in order to achieve the scope of our Institute is common life: *vita communis* .

What is intended by common life? Common life in the strict sense of the word means that life in which many live together, and all that there is in the house and in the monastery, all is in common, all may participate in everything available, and no one is the master of anything, and no one has the ownership of anything, nor is there any singularity, nor particular, exclusive, perpetual use: in brief, this is authentic poverty.

Therefore, among the sons of St. Philip, who are not religious but secular Priests, and who do not profess Poverty, each one recognizes what is his own, each has his own *peculium*, each has to pay for his own room and board; and so, there is not with this common life as described here.

Common life does reign in heaven among the blessed and the saints: all participate in one and the same good: God <sup>50</sup>. All enjoy this good: it is the same beatitude for all: and thus, there are charity, union and peace. Of the ancient Christians <sup>51</sup>, it is related in the Acts of the Apostles that they *held all in common*, because all brought of their substance and deposited it at the feet of the Apostles – cf. Rodriguez on this point – and placed everything together [cf. Ac 4:32]<sup>52</sup> ‘And Saints Cyprian, Basil, Jerome and others, say that at that time the faithful made a vow of poverty: and they prove this with the punishment meted out against Ananias and Sapphira [cf. Ac 5:1-15], who, for having hidden a part of the price of their possession were castigated with a sudden death. This is a sign that they had made a vow of poverty – because if they had not done so, they would not have suffered so great a castigation.’<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Along with the ‘*End*’, ‘*Scope*’ of the Congregation as presented by Fr. Bertoni, there are various *means* to achieve the various aspects of the **End**, variously described: as *primarily* for the glory of God and the salvation of oneself. Then, there are the *means* to obtain the salvation of oneself, of one’s neighbor: these may be spiritual, juridical, ministerial [this is studied at some length by Suarez] - our discussion for many years has been on the principal ministries, the *apostolic means*: is it one central aspect of the Apostolic Mission, or the various and proper ministries? Fr. Lenotti’s response in the previous Exhortation seems to be the customary list of possible ministries which St. Gaspar Bertoni intended.

<sup>50</sup> There is evident here the eschatological dimension of authentic common life.

<sup>51</sup> Fr. Bertoni often refers to **the Apostles with Christ**, and the **early Church**: **CF ## 252; 261; 272; 273.**

<sup>52</sup> Fr. Bertoni found in this example of the **early Church** the **ideal** for his *Original Constitutions* : **cf. CF ## 189; 226; 232.**

<sup>53</sup> For this exegesis, Fr. Lenotti quotes Rodriguez, Part III, c. 1, n. 1.

In the same way, there ought to be common life among us, which is a font of peace with oneself, with one's neighbor, with God. It brings peace to oneself, because with the common life there are not those attractions for more goods; with one's neighbor, because there is no: 'this is yours, and his', often the source of arguments and real disputes; and thus, all commit themselves to remove the disorders in the house. Common life brings peace with God because this detachment for possessions produces a greater love for God. The Apostles left their boats and nets and then they were totally of the Lord and for their neighbors. The non-believers saw the early Christians with this common life and their sharing of goods, and this was how many were converted. And so we, for this purpose of converting, and the like – [let us follow their example].

However, this common life can be more or less perfect according to its rigorous or broad manner with which it is observed. And in this way, Poverty can be more or less perfect. Among us, the common life, our Venerated Founder wanted it to be perfect: he always wanted it this way, and he himself was its most rigorous observer. Clothing was meant to be all in common. No one can have anything of his own choice from the wardrobe keeper. And that which one has today, tomorrow may be given to someone else. All is in common: the rooms were exchanged [from one to another<sup>54</sup>]. They took their meals in common, as their recreation was in common – all shared everything and no one was the master of anything. What a beautiful ideal this is! What for tune it is for a Religious Community, or Congregation where common life reigns! And how fortunate those where it is not had! One could not say much more than say poverty is there, but not much more. Where there is no common life, the saints tell us, it is better not to go there: they did not advise anyone to enter such a community.

The Supreme Pontiff, Pius IXth, in an audience with our most revered Father *Prepositus*, who had not expressed his satisfaction concerning this, expressed the satisfaction that he experienced on hearing that among us there is a perfect common life! And so, my brothers, if we did not have anything else about which to find consolation on being in this Congregation, and to thank Him a thousand times over solely for this, how great should not our gratitude toward Him be!

It is our task to guard it, this common life, with every diligence, and to make every effort so that through our own fault there not be introduced any abuses. And so, for heaven's sake, we need to ask for permissions: we should be most attentive about this,

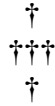
---

<sup>54</sup> Speaking to Religious Sisters, Fr. Lenotti expressed himself thus: ' Now, this common life is a representation of the celestial life – rather, that is its genuine type and its perpetual reward. In fact, St. John Chrysostom thus spoke of it against those attacking the monastic life. In Book III: *Those who remain in the monasteries, choose a living together that is celestial*. And he immediately gives the reason for this: *for all things are in common for them*. In fact, every good is held in common there; even all those blessed Spirits share it, they possess and enjoy the same Good: God Himself! There is for all the same beatitude. And precisely as they approach that blessed common life, in so far as they were endowed with this mortality of ours, he Apostles and the first Christians who, under the direction of the Apostles had all things in common, and no one said that anything belonged to anyone of them. This example was followed by Religious, especially those who under St. Mark the Evangelist established in Alexandria the foundations of the cenobitic life.

and not dispose of things at our own whim – without permission, we are not to give away anything, nor receive anything.

Let us keep in mind that the ruin and the destruction of common life – and therefore, of religious poverty - are not introduced over night, but little by little. Let us keep watch, therefore, that the Devil, on one occasion having received a pretext, and in some other situation an excuse – sometimes it is because of sickness, other times because of certain sudden attacks of it, and still other times with truly unsavory interpretations, with stretching leniency to the beyond – and still other times, out of human respect – let us say ‘no’ to all encroachments, and always to ask for the necessary permissions.

Let us look to the saints! How jealous they were of poverty! Our Parents of such happy memory! Mary, Jesus, Joseph in the Home at Nazareth!



## VIII. THE PERPETUAL EXERCISE IN EVERYTHING OF OBEDIENCE, CHASTITY AND POVERTY. [*Compendium Rude* # 6].

We are now in the Christmas Season, with a devout Crib – no matter how reduced – right before our eyes.

The Infant Jesus: *Learn from Me* the practical exercise of the Religious Virtues – Victims of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty – Examen – The Example of the Infant Jesus.

This Infant, from this hay on which He lies, goes on saying – especially to us Religious – *Learn from Me* [cf. Mt 11:29].

What should we learn, o Blessed Jesus? *Learn from Me*. But, what is it that we should learn from You, o Infant Jesus?

*Learn from Me: the perpetual exercise in everything of Obedience, Chastity and poverty* This is what I want you to learn from Me, o students of the Apostolic Missionaries: a perpetual exercise of obedience, chastity and poverty in everything. [I would wish that you would learn] to practice **this most important Rule** that Your Founder places as **the principal means to obtain the scope of your Institute**<sup>55</sup>.

What a holy rule this is! And what beautiful words! Just ponder these words, my beloved brothers! Let us weigh them one by one, because they merit this and they are most worthy of our reflection.

*The perpetual exercise:* All exercise demands a repetition of acts of that particular virtue which one needs to exercise, and a repetition of habitual acts.

Whoever exercises a liberal, or mechanical art, and the like [repeats these acts every single day]. So, it is required that we should repeat each day the acts of Obedience, of Chastity, and of Poverty, and to obey habitually, to be habitually chaste, and to be poor habitually. And not only this, but we need also to be exercised also in these virtues.

*The perpetual exercise:* therefore, this exercise must continue from morning until evening, even sleeping and eating. Should we perhaps prolong this for one month? For a year? No: these are too little. For three years, then? This too, is not enough: it is needed for the duration of one's whole life, forever.

Some time ago, we dedicated ourselves to the Lord with Vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty: therefore, this was not meant to be just for a time, as may be done in certain Congregations, but always, right up to the very last breath we are consecrated to the obedience of our Father *Prepositus*, and of those who by him are charged with

---

<sup>55</sup> Fr. Lenotti sees this Rule on the observance of the Evangelical Counsels as *the principal means to obtain the scope* of the Institute, which is, of course, the sanctification of the members, *perfectio suiipsius*. [cf. also CF ## 47 and especially 48].

directing and commanding; [we are consecrated to] Chastity, and so forth, and to poverty as well. And so, we are not vowed to be a little obedient, chaste, poor and just a little bit according to our own style...

What a beautiful thing! ***For Your sake we are put to death all the day long!*** [cf. Rm 8:36]: we are Victims for God! Do you not see this Infant was seen by St. John: ***And I saw...a Lamb standing, as it were slain...*** [cf. Rv 5:6].

***Obedience:*** therefore, obey not only in the matters we like, but also in those areas that are contrary to a natural preferences: ***in everything.***

***Chastity:*** a chastity of the eyes, ears, in the practice of modesty of our every movement: ***in everything.***

***Poverty:*** a poverty, ***in everything:*** in dressing, in eating, in drinking, in sleeping, in one's gait, in all things: ***in everything!***

But, do we really practice this our rule with exactness? This perpetual exercise of ours, how is it going? Are we truly disposed to obey perpetually, ***even unto death...*** are we indeed so much in love with castigating, and mortifying our flesh? Are we indeed lovers of suffering? Or, rather do we seek our own comforts in an excessive manner? Are we so in love with poverty?

Let us give some thought as to what this Infant is saying to us: ***Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the Book it is written of me: that I should do Your Will, o God!*** [cf. Heb 10:7].

***And He was subject to them*** [cf. Lk 2:51]: he let Himself be directed, placed, borne, and the like, wherever they wanted.

***My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands...He has gone down... to feed among the lilies*** [cf. Ct 5:10]<sup>56</sup>. This is the way Solomon depicts Him in the Canticles.

***I am poor and in labors from My youth...*** [Ps 87:16]

Have courage: ***learn of Me*** [Jesus says to us]; let us learn this ***perfect exercise,*** and so on: let us dutifully resolve to maintain that which by vow we have already sworn to the Lord to observe.

†  
†††  
†

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. also 6:1 = not noted here.

IX.

**THE PROGRAM OF LIVING WHETHER REGARDING FOOD, OR CLOTHING AND LODGING, WILL BE IN HARMONY WITH THE MORE OBSERVANT CLERGY AMONG WHOM THE MISSIONARIES LIVE, FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE FAITHFUL, BOTH REGARDING CHRISTIAN PARSIMONY AND EVANGELICAL POVERTY.**

**This rule in takes nothing away from the spirit and the practice of Christian and Religious Mortification – Fr. Lenotti’s Motto was Let us continually carry around through penance in our own body the Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ - The Mission of the Son of God and the wisdom of man – The example of the saints – We have offended God: we need internal and external penance – The spirit and acts of compunction – the Example and warnings of the Infant Jesus - to pay our debts means to anticipate the Justice of God – *Execute judgment and justice: otherwise, God will do it.* Once the rule was read, Fr. Lenotti went on:**

You see well that our Venerated Founder did not prescribe for us anything singular and extraordinary of our manner of life, regarding lodging, food and clothing and the like. Since our main task is to help of our neighbors, we ought to find ourselves continuously among our neighbors, and so there should not be anything about us that would frighten them<sup>58</sup>.

---

<sup>57</sup> This *Compendium Rude 6* is placed as it is here at the head of the Exhortation which then follows, in the very hand-writing of Fr. Lenotti. However, Fr. Stofella only removed the *etc.* that is found after the second *sive* in order to follow the Founder’s Latin through to the end. However, what follows may perchance delude the reader, in the sense that the expected explanation of this text of the Founder in the end, really does not occur here. Rather, its place is taken by a kind of exhortative caution, merely occasioned by this text, but which remains marginal to the development of his thought. Fr. Lenotti speaks here rather of the permanent necessity of **the spirit of penance.**

It seems that Fr. Lenotti was overtaken here by a concern of his: that sooner or later, some confrere would misunderstand this *Program of Living* and its limits, and would take up forthwith the expression *the more perfect, observant clergy* and what follows immediately afterwards *Christian parsimony* and *Evangelical Poverty*. Fr. Lenotti’s fear was that this rule would be understood to render the regular observance more comfortable. He goes on: ‘This is indeed not what the Founder intended!’ And then he adds that there remains in play the spirit of Christian penance – or, mortification – to which all Religious are held even more than others would be, as a duty of their state in life. For his part, Fr. Lenotti wrote along side of a meditation on the *Crucifixion* of the Lord, for the Retreat that he preached also to our own men, taking inspiration from a motto that might be characteristic to him: *Let us continually carry around through penance in our own body, the Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ.* It is quite clear that his own teaching and witness he directed along this path: we will follow this in the indications he has left behind in his manuscript.

With regard to the *Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ* - included in the official title given to the Congregation at the approval of the Constitutions in September 1890 – would be in full accord with one of Fr. Marani’s idea of calling us *The Order of the Sacred Stigmata*. Here we find the *Sacred Stigmata* as a vital part of Fr. Lenotti’s own spirituality.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Rodriguez, Part II, tr. I, c. VII, n. 2: ‘Many just reasons moved our holy Father [Ignatius] to establish and to order that the **manner of living** [cf. our *modus, in: CF # 2*] of the Company of Jesus should be common as regards external appearances, because all the means have to be in proportion to the end. And since the end of the Company of Jesus is not only to attend to one’s own profit, but also to the spiritual salvation and profit of our neighbors, it was most fitting that we should have a **habit in common with the Priests working in the cities.** This would insure a greater possible to be received by all kinds of persons.’

However, our Venerated Founder did not intend by this Rule that there be done cast aside every penance, and especially that *spirit of penance*, so often preached by Jesus Christ in the Gospel with His words *Do penance*, which was His first Sermon: *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand* [cf. Mt 4:17]<sup>59</sup>.

*Do penance*: this was the Summary, the **Compendium**, the **end** and the **scope** of the whole Mission of God's Son in this world: i.e., to invite men and women to penance and to the changing of their customs, the restraining of their passions, to a mortified and holy life, and from all this they would thus merit to enter into the Reign of Heaven. By His death, He is about to open this for them.

This is authentic wisdom, this is the end, the goal, the ultimate human good: do penance, and with this penance to acquire for oneself the reign of heaven, eternal glory.

The Saints animated by this voice and by this spirit of Jesus Christ, were all lovers of penance. It would suffice to read their lives to see the privations, the austerities, the fasts, the disciplines, the discomfort, the sufferings of every type, the penalties to which they subjected themselves.

We, on our part, by our sins have offended God our Creator, Redeemer and Father and **Spouse**<sup>60</sup> of our souls: *do penance!* The Divine Judge says this with full freedom, rather He commands this to us: this is penance of the spirit, with contrition and repentance: external penance in the body with mortification. The first consists in detesting sin, and the second in punishing it with salutary acts that bring satisfaction.

About the former, I will say only this: that exercising oneself often in compunction of heart and in acts of sorrow is a most helpful exercise for the soul. There are unfortunately certain religious souls who in their meditations, in their devotions, and so on, do not like so much to think of their transgressions and defects, because it is one thing that does not give them much joy, and it is rare that they would repent of all these. The Saints did not act in this way. Their favorite exercise was that of weeping over their transgressions: *my sin is always before me* [cf. Ps 50:5]. This is what David said. And *every night I will wash my bed: I will water my couch with my tears.* [cf. Ps 6:7]. St. Peter formed furrows in his cheeks from his tears.

---

And further on: 'If we had worn a harsh habit, that spirit of any poor sinful person would have more than sufficed to make him afraid to approach us, thinking that we would thus be harsh with him.

<sup>59</sup> In Fr. Lenotti's text, there is a note right here: 'cf. Pinamonti and my Instruction on External Penance.' Pinamonte comes later. Here is Fr. Lenotti's own Instruction, which was presented as an Instruction to the People, which is more complete. To this there are two traces of interdependent instructions that are interwoven: to the Nuns and to the Seminarians. What follows is from these, without changing anything, according to what the original text manifests.

<sup>60</sup> The espousal theme in the spiritual life was quite common among the early Stigmatines.

Let us come now to external penance: but, since we are in the Christmas time, let us first say something about the Baby Jesus <sup>61</sup>.

He lies in a rather rude cave, a wretched stable, a hay barn, and a little babe trembles with the cold. There are two animals who with their warm breath bring some heat to the stable: a woman and a man who suffer His pains with him: what a marvelous spectacle this is! This stable, my brothers, I intend that it should be our **school** <sup>62</sup>: this is the **School of the Son of God!** That hay, that barn is his professor's chair. What are the lessons of such a divine master? He speaks with His deeds, not with just words: He preaches with example, more eloquent than rhetorical devices: *Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart!* [cf. Mt 11:29]. And He wants our hearts: *My son, give Me your heart...* [cf. Pr 23:26]. But, do you believe that our love, provided that it be authentic love, would not stop at merely words, in empty tenderness? No, He wants works, and deeds. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.* [cf. Ga 5:24] <sup>63</sup>.

What could be more suitable for an honorable and truly good man – just read Pinamonte's: *The Religious Sister in Solitude* – than to pay his debts?

'The ancient Persians had to their great shame the reputation of dying without paying their debts. And with even more reason there should be heaped on a soul the great shame of departing from this world without first having satisfied his responsibilities and his debts before the divine tribunal. Otherwise, the not choosing to pay, if not out of sheer necessity, is incurring even greater indebtedness with God, as St. Cyprian tells us: 'these are the greater crimes: to have sinned, and not to make satisfaction: to prove delinquent and not to pay up the debts.'

*I feared all my words, knowing that You will not spare the offender:* this is what the holy Job says [cf. Jb 9:28] – as quoted by Pinamonti: 'this means that the Lord does not pardon in the manner of delinquents whoever does not seek to make satisfaction from their excesses. Having posited this, it is necessary to think of not incurring debts with the Lord, but, if we are already indebted, it is a genuine cruelty heaped upon oneself that not thinking to do penance: while that which could be paid off with a relatively light satisfaction, it will be commuted later to pay this debt with an indescribable weight of torment.

'It happened once upon a time that a sick man suffered from a worm infested wound. And the surgeon, in order to spare pain from the languishing man permitted him to squeeze it and clean it with his own hands. However, as soon as the doctor noticed that the sick man did not squeeze it and purify the wound sufficiently, put himself to

---

<sup>61</sup> Fr. Stofella thinks we are dealing here either with Christmas 1849, or new Year's 1850.

<sup>62</sup> Fr. Bertoni himself often used this example – such as suffering as **the School of God** – cf. *Epistolario*, pp. 109; 256, f.; 326

<sup>63</sup> Here Fr. Lenotti returns to his original thought, where he makes an immediate reference to the *Religious Sister in Solitude*, of Fr. Pinamonti. The texts noted here are those from the 'Lesson for the Third Day: On the Virtue of Penance – Means to acquire its spirit – Acts with which it is exercised.'

this task and allowed the man to cry out and gnash his teeth without pity. The reason was that in this way, in the end, the wound would be cured. This is what the divine justice does with souls who are excessively delicate. Thus, it will be noted that he who fears too much a bit of pallor, what would be of those voluntary austerities, when he is then buried in a horrible blizzard, which is the rigor of the Tribunal of heaven: *They that fear the hoary frost, the snow shall fall upon them!* [Jb 6:16].

And yet, who would believe this? When the subject of penance comes up, even among certain religious souls, it almost seems as though this were a barbaric language, which they do not know, or better: which they do not want to understand. It almost seems as though there had not been promulgated that law: *Man is born to labor* [cf. Jb 5.7] : that for them, the words of Christ have no meaning: *Do penance!* Those religious souls who have no desire to do penance, show sufficiently well that they simply do not have a religious spirit. Is not the religious state one of penance, mortification? If we would want everything tailored for our own tastes, that of suffering nothing, then we should have remained home. It is not the soul alone to have transgressed the divine commands, but also the body. Rather, many times it is the body principally: so, is it not just, then, rather most just, that the body should also play its role in satisfaction, in that the penalty be in some way conform to the crime?

*Execute judgment and justice* [cf. Jr 22:3]: it is not enough to make a judgment, and to condemn the guilty, it is then necessary to punish him. Our body is an implacable enemy, within our own household, who is so self-satisfied that he does not bother to command himself, and so his soul will be in hell forever. Whoever is angry with his donkey does not pet it, nor caress it, but strikes it, forces it.

In addition to the voluntary penances there are those penalties that come to us from the hand of God, or which he permits that come to us through free causes, such as ingratitude from others, being the butt of jokes, contumelies, denunciations, calumnies, injustices: all these suffer patiently, with peace. Be careful rather that you pay your debts by means of them, and do not increase them stupidly by arguments, acts of impatience. God is the Creditor in our regard, Who is most discreetly loving – He has compassion on the weakness of our reasoning, and He accepts as payment also those evils that are not chosen by us, and is content that out of necessity we make a virtue.

If we do not wish to do penance of ourselves, let us recall well that sooner or later God will do it for us – but alas! How severe it will be! Let us take up the sword of mortification, of penance against ourselves, before the Divine Judge employs the sword of His tremendous Justice against us.

†  
†††

†

