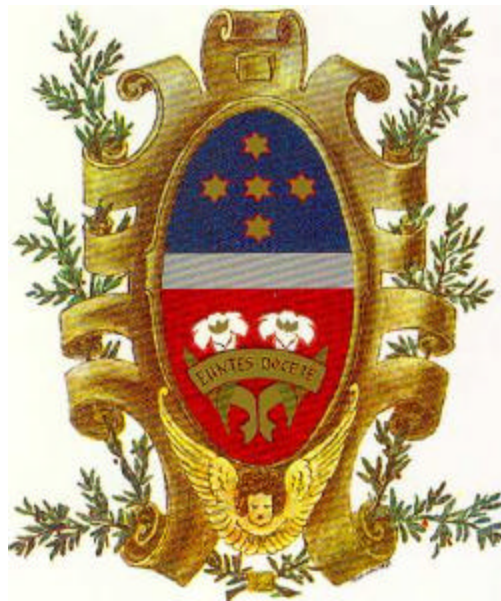


**St. Gaspar Bertoni's
Trinitarian Eucharistic Charism
in the Apostolic Mission**

Modus ... Obsequii

[CF ## 1 & 2]



Central Ignatian Ideals

substantially mirrored, creatively copied and adapted

in our

Original Constitutions

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Foreword

St. Gaspar Bertoni's Trinitarian, Eucharistic Charism in the Apostolic Mission

A. The Trinity

August 24, 1808

At St. Joseph's Convent. At the base of one's own nothingness, God may be found. While experiencing some sublime insights regarding God, I also had a much deeper understanding of myself.

This evening I saw a painting of the Most Blessed Trinity. This inspired much reverence and love for the Three Persons. **The Eternal Father was depicted with His arms open, which explained His Mercy to me, and the ready communication of His gifts.**

Thereafter, the Office was said with much devotion and for the glory of God. ¹

September 27, 1808

Meditation today was on the Incarnation. **I experienced feelings of gratitude for the Most Holy Trinity, and of correspondence with Jesus Christ.** I was obliged to love God even before he became man: how much more now. ²

September 28, 1808:

During Meditation today and afterwards, there was the desire for martyrdom, and prayer for it, along with deep interior exhortation.

This evening, expression of pardon. There was **a sentiment of great love toward the Most Holy Trinity, in giving us the Son.** Toward Him, there were feelings of much tenderness together with a very vivid faith, and **a great desire for union.** There was also **the yearning for association** in His sufferings and shame - with a prayer for the grace to suffer and even to be disregarded as He was. ³

B. The Eucharist

The Principal Means offered to support Christian Hope in St. Gaspar Bertoni's Thought

In the meeting of the infinite Mercy of God with the abysmal misery of humanity, Fr. Bertoni's faith nurtured his hope, principally in the employment of the following sources of spirituality. Of a wide variety of fonts, the following seem to peak in so many of his expressions:

a. To open the New Year of 1803, Fr. Bertoni offered these thoughts on "The Beauty of Grace":

¹ Memoriale Privato.

² ib.

³ ib.

... Make of yourselves new creatures - and may each of you be sustained by that rectitude with which the Lord first created you, raising you up to new hopes in Him. Each one of us has the task to prove how good You are to the pure of heart (cf. Ps 73:1). And then one day, no longer under the veils and in the obscure shadow of faith - as we adore You now under the Sacred Species - we will at long last be able to contemplate You, to love You, to possess You, face to face, as You have promised to the clean of heart - for all eternity, true Center, sole Purpose and last End of our hearts: 'God, create in me a clean heart, put into me a new and constant spirit' (cf. Ps 51:10)...⁴

b. St. Gaspar Bertoni looked on the Eucharist as a means of handling even the ordinary, every-day tasks of this world:

... By being united to true Wisdom, Who is Christ, one's mind becomes well illumined to take direction prudently in one's interests. By going to the very font of Strength, one comes to have a share in it, to be able to sustain the burden of those cares which weigh upon one, without experiencing oppression. One is truly helped and one's burdens are lessened, as Christ Himself has said: 'Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest!' (cf. Mt 11:28).

This is so true in that our loving Lord not only takes pleasure in giving grace to souls, but takes even special care of the interests of those who lovingly turn toward Him...⁵

c. The Stigmatine Founder considered the Eucharist as a great help for the Apostolic Mission:

... For the grand effort needed to divine service, this is most surely a help. And we can work with what seems to be four hands, rather than with just two! Neither throughout, nor the study of this secret part of the glory of God - no one has ever taken it from me, nor, I hope, will I ever be impeded from working for it, from promoting it, with all the weak powers whatever of these may be at my disposal.

So, Sister, with the offering of Masses in which more trust is to be placed than in all the efforts of my own hands and than in my studies and words, and with whatever I might be able to do in the Lord, I offer myself now and always to your service, and to that of your compassion...⁶

1.] This offering of Masses for the interests of the Apostolic Mission was an habitual manner of procedure of our Founder:

... On Saturday, I will, with God's help, ask His divine Majesty for assistance. However, you, too, should pray that I might be made worthy and that I might myself offer this prayer at the Altar, as I really want to do. I offer this with an

⁴ cf. Sermon 15, January 1, 1803, in: PVC, p. 129.

⁵ Sermon 17, "Frequent Communion", March 20, 1803, in: PVC, pp. 105, ff.

⁶ cf. Letter 2, November 25, 1812, n. 430: Ep, p. 27.

even greater confidence that my prayers will not be rejected by reason of my personal unworthiness...⁷

2.] So many times, this idea is found in his writings, his praying for the success of some aspect of the Apostolic Mission:

... On Thursday, I will begin the Masses, and when I am not impeded by some other reason, I will offer them at the Altar of St. Francis Xavier...⁸

3.] Many times he offered his Mass for the Apostolic Mission of his penitents, always presupposing that the interested parties were giving their vest to the effort:

... When you begin this endeavor, I will once again begin the Masses, since this is all so important. It is most necessary to prepare and order things with utmost diligence, and to remember those words of St. Paul: 'The love of Christ overwhelms us!' (cf. 2 Co 5:14).⁹

4.] This series of Letters all written a few days of each other, shows Fr. Bertoni accompanying the efforts of Mother Naudet with his Mass:

... In the meantime, I will immediately begin the Masses. You, too, should begin a series of petitions. And the Lord, in His goodness, will not be lacking in His light for a matter that is so important for His interests...¹⁰

5.] This intense Eucharistic prayer carried over well into the new year:

... I will not fail to pray to the Lord in my weakness for this new undertaking of yours. And if the Lord thinks me worthy, I will begin to apply the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. 'Prepare the way of the Lord!' (cf. is 40:3; Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4)...¹¹

6.] This thought occurs so often, namely, that of offering the Mass for the Apostolic Mission, that it has to be considered as his usual manner of responding to the needs of the Church:

... Nor, have I failed, in my own weakness, to recommend this whole matter to the Lord. I have offered Mass yesterday and this morning for this intention. I have such great confidence in this, and while my pride does not merit to be heard,

⁷ cf. Letter 18, in: Ep, pp., 114, f.

⁸ cf. Letter 4, December 1, 1812, in: Ep, p.32.

⁹ cf. Letter 6, December 11, 1812, in: Ep, pp. 34.

¹⁰ cf. Letter 7, December 14, 1812, in Ep, p. 37.

¹¹ cf. Letter 18, February 3, 1813, in: Ep, pp. 60, ff.

nonetheless, the humble reverence of His Son will be graciously heard by the heavenly Father for His own greater honor and glory...¹²

d. It pained him sorely when he was not able to further some Apostolic Mission with his own offering of the Eucharist:

... I am really sorry that I cannot accompany this endeavor with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Only on Thursday, will the doctor allow me even to go to hear Mass. [Most likely "Thursday" that week of that year was the "Corpus Christi" celebration]. Perhaps you could have your companions, who may be free from study, help with a certain number of your prayers more than those called by the daily schedule. In the last analysis, endeavors of this type depend most principally on prayer...¹³

1.] When he was not able to do much else, he followed the efforts of others with his daily Mass;

... I have followed this same intention in my daily Mass, since I am unable to do any more than this...¹⁴

2.] The Eucharist allowed him to share in the Apostolic Mission of others:

... I have not failed with my own prayer that has been asked for, and I have also given the order for other Masses for this intention. Now I ask also for a remembrance in your prayers...¹⁵

e. When he was able to celebrate the Eucharist, his heart was filled with great joy, and he included the intentions of Sister Naudet's community in his offering:

... And I immediately, and still persevere, in giving thanks to His divine Majesty in so far as I can. And as long as my strength will permit, I celebrate the Mass every day, offering to our Heavenly Father His Most Beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased. I also pray continuously that the Lord might assist you and all your sage companions and daughters, with His Spirit. This is how He acts with those who are chosen to undertake such tasks, so that the Divine Glory might be realized. This is what He waits for, that the fruit in behalf of souls might be abundant...¹⁶

1.] This offering of the Eucharist for the success of the Apostolic Mission is also codified in Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions:

¹² cf. Letter 39, in: Ep, p. 101.

¹³ cf. Letter 46, June 4, 1814, in: Ep, p. 110.

¹⁴ cf. Letter 57, October 13, 1815 - just about three weeks prior to coming to the Stimate to begin his community of priests, "according to the mind of St. Ignatius".

¹⁵ cf. Letter 106, in: Ep, p. 199.

¹⁶ cf. Letter 186, in: Ep, p. 288.

... The following are the means with which our Congregation promotes the salvation of our neighbors:

The administration of the Sacraments, especially that of Penance and the Eucharist, imploring from God, also with the celebration of Holy Masses, the fruit of the Missions and the preaching...¹⁷

2.] In union with the consistent tradition of the Church, the Stigmatine Founder considered the Eucharist also as a powerful means to heal the wounds of life:

... The Eucharist is an excellent medicine of the soul. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Bernard are all in accord in this saying that the Eucharist is an excellent medicine against sin. St. Cyprian wrote that the Chalice of the Lord inebriates, in that it leads the mind to spiritual wisdom and that whoever partakes of it, finds that his intelligence is geared away from the taste for this world and toward a desire for God. And just as anyone who drinks earthly and common wine might find that his mind experiences some enjoyment, and that one's spirit is built up anew and chases away all sadness. In like manner, whoever tastes the salutary drink of the Blood of the Lord, simply loses the memory of the 'old man', forgets the earlier worldly conversations. Such a one sees that while he might first have experienced the oppressions of sins that crushed him, now through the joy of the gift made to him by God, sees his anguish resolved, and that his worries become less... (cf. St. Cyprian, Letter 72, p. 11)...¹⁸

f. Based on this Patristic teaching, Fr. Bertoni saw the Eucharist as a privileged means of trusting more in the divine mercy, and increasing one's fervor:

... And even though at times one will experience total aridity and a lack of fervor, if he will only trust in divine mercy, he will receive it confidently. The reason is that the more one thinks that he is unworthy, he will come to the realization that he needs the doctor. This is the situation of those who find themselves ill. (A thought from St. Bonaventure)...¹⁹

g. Throughout his life, Fr. Bertoni experienced a deep familiarity with the Eucharist, and had tremendous confidence in this unique source of Divine Grace:

... This is the invitation of the Divine Lover of souls: I am your Father, Master, Friend, Brother. If you ever fall ill, I am also your Doctor, I am your Health. And one day, I will be your Beatitude, your Glory...²⁰

h. The daily participation in the Eucharist was for the Stigmatine Founder a great motive for Hope:

¹⁷ CF # 162.

¹⁸ cf. Sermon 17, "Frequent Communion", March 20, 1803, in: PVC, pp. 108, ff.

¹⁹ cf. l.c., p. 110.

²⁰ cf. l.c., p. 111.

... Not even death, whatever kind it may be, can remove love, even though love, in the words of the Wise Man (cf. Ct 8:6), is as strong as death is. So, this Lover does not pay the price for His beloved with incorruptible gold or silver, but rather with all His Precious Blood (cf. 1 P 1:18).

And should the beloved ever again fall into the hands of the infernal enemy by lowering himself with sin, Jesus will return each day in the suffering of this same Victim on the altars. His will was for His beloved with His Blood, of which He has opened a perennial source of it in the bosom of the Church...²¹

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²¹ cf. Sermon 3, “The Name of Jesus”, the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, 1801, in: PVC, pp. 238, ff.

Presentation

Jesus' Personal Mission from the Father

The setting of Jesus' own evangelical journeys and the Mission of the Apostles might be seen in these verses:

...Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom... And when He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected like sheep without a shepherd ... He summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits ... These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows: 'Proclaim that the kingdom of God is close at hand ... You received without charge, give without charge ... [Mt 9:35-10:9].

... [Jesus] now went up into the hills and summoned these He wanted. So they came to Him and he appointed twelve; they were to be His companions and to be sent out to preach, with power to cast out devils ... [Mk 3:13, ff.].

... Now it was about this time that Jesus went out into the hills to pray; and He went the whole night in prayer to God. When day came He summoned His disciples and picked out twelve of them; He called them Apostles ... [Lk 6:12, ff.].

Introduction

The 'Five Chapters' of the Ignatian *Formula* reflected in the Stigmatine *Original Constitutions*.

St. Ignatius and his original companions prayed these texts and others as they discussed their future together, *with one another*, in the *Company, Society of Jesus*. In the late spring of 1539, their discussions led to the following five points, came to be known as 'the Five Chapters', that would make up the 9 paragraphs found in the Ignatian *Formula* as we have it now. This, then, would be explained, 'fleshed out' in the 827 Jesuit Constitutions that follow.

For Fr. Bertoni, the *Compendium Rude* [CF ## 1-8] is somewhat comparable to the Ignatian *Formula*, and this is explained in the 314 *Original Constitutions* compiled by St. Gaspar Bertoni.

The original 'Five Chapters' are the summary [the *Formula*] resulting from the early meetings of the first Companions of St. Ignatius. St. Gaspar Bertoni seems to have followed these very closely, as well as the subsequent formulations of St. Ignatius in the *explicitation* of his *Compendium Rude*, throughout his *Original Constitutions*:

I. The '**End**' of the Company and its Fundamental Regime [*Formula nn. 1 & 2*]. [CF # 1]. This first 'Chapter' presents **the aim, scope, purpose**, the apostolic vocation. The Society was founded chiefly for the sake of striving especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine. Everything may be summarized in **the Ministry of the Word** and the Administration of the Sacraments, rather than emphasizing the cultic aspect, which was the order of the day for monastic forms of religious life. The 'Ministration of the Word of God' is a biblical expression. The **Acts of the Apostles** relate how in the dispute over the assistance given to the widows, the Apostles said: *It would not be right for us to neglect the Word of God so as to give food... We will continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the Word...* [Ac 6:2, 20-24]. These aims can be expressed by the word *evangelization*, were made more familiar to us in the Holy Year 1975 by Pope Paul VI, in his Encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. The emphasis on **gratuity** [cf. CF # 3] aimed at **imitating** the life-style and activities of the **Apostles** in the company, Society of Jesus.

II. The Special **Missionary Mode of Obedience** to the Supreme Pontiff [n. 3 – 5]. [CF # 2]. This explains the Fourth Vow, **the special obedience to the Pope**. The whole Society lives under a particular kind of dependence, not common to other religious orders. *Formula 3* reads: *...The Gospel does indeed teach us, and we know from orthodox faith and firmly hold that all of Christ's faithful are subject to the Roman Pontiff as their head and as the Vicar of Christ. Yet, [three reasons listed for the greater ecclesial obedience] for the sake of greater devotion in obedience to the Holy See; of greater abnegation of our own wills, and of surer direction from the Holy Spirit ... It was to obtain a surer direction*

from the Holy Spirit that the Society placed itself in the Pope's hands. St. Gaspar Bertoni reflects this in **CF # 185: *ad non errandum in via Dei***. St. Ignatius explains the **Modality of this Vow**:

St. Ignatius goes on in his *Formula*: ... We have judged it to be extremely profitable if each one of us and all those who may make the same Profession in the future, would, in addition to the ordinary bond of the three vows, **be bound by a special vow [of obedience]** ... For Fr. Bertoni, this **special ecclesial obedience** – not any vow to any single Bishop, is expressed under ***Modus – CF # 2***. There are various words emphasizing **submission, service, obedience** to the Bishops: ***sub directione et dependentia Ordinariorum... quibus omnino parere debeant ... ac licentiam prius cum facultatibus, servata semper eorundem Ordinariorum... moderatione...***

The spiritual aspect of this special obedience is more important than the merely juridical aspects. The spiritual aspect is expressed by the Eucharistic word, ***obsequium***. **By reserving the Apostolic Mission to the Bishops, the Congregation is more intimately united to Christ, lovingly obedient to His Father,** more immediately and more intimately.

III. The exercise of **Corporate, Community Obedience** within the Company [n. 6]. **[CF # 8]**. This is reflected in **CF # 8: a 'prelate' for life**; each house with its own superior and various Minor Officials

IV. **Missionary Poverty** within the Company and the regimen of the scholastics [nn. 7-8]: this Jesuit ideal is coined in Ignatius' phrase: ***'Praedicare in paupertate'***. **[CF # 6]**. This is reflected by St. Gaspar: ***ratio vivendi, sive quoad alimenta pertinet, sive quod ad vestes et tectum erit consentanea clericis perfectioribus...***

V. **Miscellaneous**: Other Points more in particular, of this Form of Life [e.g., **no specific Religious Habit; nor Choral Recitation** of the Liturgy of Hours, etc.] [n. 9]²².

†††

²² Cf. A. M. de Aldama, SJ, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. The Formula of the Institute*. St. Louis 1990; *An Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions*. St. Louis 1989. cf. also Aa.Vv., *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús. Introducción y notas para su lectura*. S. Arzubialde, J. Corella, J.M. Garcia Lomas [eds. Mensajero: Sal Terrae, pp. 13-29, *passim*.