

St. Gaspar Bertoni's Ecclesial Service:

**Community, Corporate, Domestic Obedience
&
Apostolic, Missionary, Doctrinal Obedience**
[In obsequium]



[CF 2; 138-151; 158-186]

UNION OF HEARTS & UNITY OF APOSTOLIC SERVICE

†

St. Ignatius's Letter on Obedience

[March 1553]

&

The Conclusion to His *Spiritual Exercises*

[*Sentire Cum Ecclesia*]

[SpEx nn. 352-370]

Volume II

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PRESENTATION

**SEVENTH PART of *Original Constitutions*
of St. GASPAR BERTONI**

**THE OBSERVANCE OF THESE VOWS
[SECTIONS I – IV, ## 90-151]**

FOURTH SECTION: THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE [## 138-151]

Chapter 1: Obedience in General [## 138-141]

Chapter 2: The Degrees of Obedience in Particular [## 142-151]

**FOURTH SECTION:
ON THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE**

**Chapter 1
On Obedience in General**

138.All the Rules and prescriptions in this Institute do not oblige under any sin, either mortal, or venial. In like manner, the simple command of the Superior is not considered to include any obligation under sin, unless he should add 'in virtue of obedience', or something similar.

139.All will obey even the subordinate Superior, or anyone who may have been placed over their office, and anyone who has received from the superiors the faculty of commanding, **as one would obey Christ himself.**

140.All will take care that when they indeed do obey, they will also further **conform their will and mind itself** to the order of the Superior.

141.The obedience that is to be shown in everything that is ordered which does not go against the precepts of God, or the Church, or the rules of this Institute, is to be **integral, prompt, strong and humble with the perfect abnegation of one's own will and judgment.**

**Chapter 2
On the Degrees of Obedience
in Particular**

142.In the first place, all will take care that in its **execution**, or in the act of obedience, that this be shown **integrally**, and not only in a partial manner. This holds true not only in obligatory matters, as this is simply required, but also with a view to the height of perfection in all other proper areas. For that obedience is **perfect**, when it is **universal** and makes no exception, unless in what would displease God. Obedience will be all the more prompt when it **anticipates** the expressed precept of the Superior, once his will has come to be understood.

143. Promptness also will especially appear in the act of obedience, so that no one will slowly or hesitatingly accede to carrying out what has been ordained. Rather, the confreres will rival the heavenly spirits on earth, putting aside all delay, leaving behind all their own projects, they will hasten and even **fly to do the will of their Lord**, just as soon as each one comes to know of the wishes of the superior, or perceive a sign from him. Such **perfect obedience** leaves unfinished one's own business.

144. The act of obedience will also be **humble** when no excuse is brought forward before carrying it out. However, should a real impediment arise, or at least a confrere considers that there is one, or that he entertains some probable doubt concerning it, this will be humbly pointed out to the Superior, and the solution will be left up to him.

145. Lastly, the act of obedience is to be **strong**, that is, **constant**, and with due **perseverance**, so that it not be held back in anything, or at any time, no matter how difficult and repugnant to nature it may be.

146. In the second place, then, as to all that pertains to **the exercise of the will** in obeying, it should primarily be **pure**. And the formal intention of obedience is toward the observance of the precept, and toward the fulfillment of the will of the Superior; or, **more exactly, of the will of God, which is manifested in it and through it.**

147. Obedience must also be **voluntary**, so that very **freely** and very **diligently** the confrere will defer, as Jerome states, to the 'Superior of the monastery, **fearing him as the Lord, and loving him as the Father**'. [cf. *Ep.* 125 ad Rusticum, c. 15. t. 1, 937 A]

148. Lastly, obedience should be carried out with a smile and with **spiritual joy** and that it be observed with a constant and persevering mind, and with all humility of spirit.

149. In the **third** place, in so far as the **intellect** is concerned, all will strive and take every care that obedience be entirely **simple**, so that they will not look upon the Superior as a man, but as God, and that **they accept his command not as human, but as divine.**

150. The confreres will not inquire about the reasons of the order, nor discuss it, nor analyze it provided that all that is ordained is beyond sin. No one should pass judgment on the decision of the Superior, as the role [of the subject] is to obey and to carry out what is ordered, in harmony with the statement of Moses: ***Listen Israel, and be silent!*** [Exodus, Dt]. This is precisely what wisdom is: that in this field, one must not have any, as the Apostle states: ***Whoever wishes to be wise, should be the fool!*** [cf. 1 Co 3:18].

151. Each one will make every effort to be ruled by that counsel and judgment, according to the saying of the Fathers, found in Cassian [*Coll.* 2, c. 11], to be carefully retained: that by no other vice does the Devil up-end the monk, and leads him to death, than when he persuades one to trust in his own judgment and conviction, rejecting the counsels of his **Seniors**.