

St. Gaspar Bertoni



Parte I

[CF ## 9 - 26]

of his

Original Constitutions

A Study by

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FIRST PART
THOSE MATTERS WHICH PRECEDE ADMISSION
[CF cc. 1-3, ## 9-26]

Presentation:

- [1] This **First Part** of Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions contains three chapters:
1. Regarding those to be admitted, or received - "natural" impediments [CF ## 9-19];
 2. Those Defects which render a Person less suited for this Sodality [CF## 20-24];
 3. The Positive Characteristics of those to be admitted [CF ## 25-26].

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- [2] **Chapter 1** treats of natural impediments:

- # 9 at least 14 years of age [cf. below, **CF # 26**];
- # 10 natural impediments, regarding judgment - impediment of the intellect [cf. below, **CF # 20**];
- # 11 one who has consummated marriage - impediment of an earlier life's choice;
- # 12 one who had been vested with the habit of another religious community - same as the preceding;
- # 13 one weighed down with debts, civic obligations;
- # 14 defect of family, or a good reputation;
- # 15 any canonical irregularity, excommunication;
- # 16 son of a Jewish father;
- # 17 physical sickness, or weakness, making the burdens of religion too heavy - physical impediment;
- # 18 one who is not easy to correct - impediment of the will [cf. below, **CF # 18**];
- # 19 *ineptitude* for regular observance - impediment of the will.

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- [3] **Chapter 2** treats of those "less suited" for this Congregation:

- # 20 slowness of intelligence, defect of judgment [cf. above, **CF # 10**];
- # 21 one who finds it difficult to practice virtue: will [cf. above, **CF # 18**];
- # 22 one who is sickly, weak - physical difficulties [cf. above, **CF # 17**];
- # 23 one who has debts, civil obligations [cf. above, **CF # 13**];
- # 24 prayer needed for the acceptance of any candidate.

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[4] **Chapter 3** treats of the positive traits of the different Grades of membership:

25: for **Brothers**: that they be content; sufficient physical strength and intelligence - and only a limited number to be accepted [cf. also **CF ## 64; 78-82**];

26: for the **Spiritual Coadjutors**:

- intellect: capacity of understanding and good judgment [cf. above **CF # 20**]; sufficient memory;
- will: zealous for perfection, and peaceful;
- apostolic: constant in the divine service and zeal for salvation;
- physical: age 14 [cf. above **CF # 9**]; sufficient health [cf. above **CF # 17**]; strength, good appearance, edifying, and pleasing manner of speech.

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**St. Gaspar Bertoni:
Pars Ia, cc. 1-3, ## 9-26**

Premise

[1] As Fr. Stofella noted ¹, this **First Part** and the following **Second Part** of St. Gaspar Bertoni's *Original Constitutions*, are solidly based also on the *Constitutions* of St. Ignatius - as well as on the corresponding **Commentary of F. Suarez**. For the time being, the emphasis here will be on the broad support of these "absolute", "substantial" impediments; those of a more "accidental", or "secondary" nature - as well as the positive traits to be looked for in candidates for admission into the Institute.

[2] This First Part of the Stigmatine *Original Constitutions* [## 9-26] is divided into three chapters:

- c. 1: Absolute, substantial requirements, and impediments [CF ## 9-19];
- c. 2: Secondary, more accidental impediments [CF ## 20-24];
- c. 3: Positive traits to be sought in those to be admitted [CF ## 25-26].

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c. 1: "Substantial", "Absolute" Requirements and Impediments [## 9-19]:

CF # 9: Minimum age: there is a further reference to this in **CF ## 22, 25, 26**, that candidates exceed 14 years of age. There is repeated reference in the stipulations of **CSJ**:

¹ cf. *Costituzioni del ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni...*, o.c. A.M.B.: Verona 1951, p. 50, footnote.

- n. 160: Part I, c. 2, n. 12: those admitted must exceed 14 years of age - and be 25 before Profession:

...They should be of an age suitable for what has been stated, that is, more than 14 years for admission to probation, and more than 25 years for profession. [cf. nn. 34; 185; 187].

- n. 185: Part I, c. 3, n. 15, K - in generic terms;
- n. 187: Part I, c. 3, Declaration n. 15, K: the Prepositus General could dispense from this requirement.

CF # 10: “natural” impediments, such as defects of good judgment and those of intellect - this comes up again: # 18, those who have difficulties in learning; in **CF # 26**, with regard to the “Spiritual Coadjutors”, in the concluding number of the First Part.

- n. 106: Examen, c. 5, n. 3: whether the candidate is endowed with good memory, understanding:

**... Does he think he has a memory to grasp and retain what he studies?
Does he think that his intellect enables him to penetrate quickly and well what he studies [cf. n. 154]?
Does he find in himself a natural, or spontaneous inclination in studies?**

CF # 11: a consummated marriage, is often mentioned:

- n. 28: Examen, c. 2, n. 4: St. Ignatius considered a consummated marriage - as well as the donning of a religious habit - an insurmountable impediment - as he notes in his n. 30: that the good Christian should remain firm in his **first** vocation:
- **n. 41, Examen, c. 3, n. 5, C;**
- **n. 173, Part I, c. 3, n. 6;**
- **n. 217, Part II, c. 2, n. 5.**

CF # 12: the donning of a religious habit also constitutes an impediment of this kind:

- **n. 25: this is the Examen, c. 2, n. 3; it is noted again in n. 45, speaks of the obligation of ecclesiastical Orders, in Examen, c. 3, n. 9;**
- **n. 171, Part I, c. 3, n. 5**

CF # 13: [cf. below, **CF # 23**] speaks of being burdened with debts, financial or civil obligations, are an impediment:

- **n. 38: Examen, c. 3, n. 3;**
- **n. 42: Examen, c. 3, n. 6;**

- n. 185: Part I, c. 3, n. 15, L;
- n. 217: Part II, c. 2, n. 5.
- n. 591: Part VI, c. 3, n. 7 - debts & wills

CF # 14: the defect of a legitimate birth, or good reputation:

- nn. 25, 26: Examen, c. 2;
- n. 36: Examen, c. 3, n. 2;
- n. 161: Part I, c. 2, n. 13.

CF # 15: canonical irregularities for homicide; mutilation; heresy, schism; excommunication; one who has struck a cleric!

- nn. 22-26: Examen, c. 2;
- nn. 165-170: Part I, c. 3.

CF # 16: born of a Jewish father ² - this appears in a broader manner in SCJ, demanding Christian parents:

² This matter would need much reflection, prayer - the early Jesuits had long resolved this matter in the proper Christian manner – cf. James Broderick, SJ, *The Progress of the Jesuits [1556-1579]*. Loyola Press Reprint [from 1940], pp. 119, ff.; 314-321: ... *Our holy Father Ignatius admitted men of Jewish extraction who by their sanctity and learning have rendered our Society illustrious and at the Council of Trent preserved its institute inviolate...*[p. 316, f.] - ... *St. Ignatius regarded Jewish blood as a privilege rather than a disgrace. God forbid that his sons should think disparagingly of the race which gave them Jesus and His Mother...* [cf. p. 320] Ignatius himself admitted Diego Laynez, who succeeded him as Father General [July 2, 1558- Jan. 19, 1565].

Some scholars would consider as one source for much of the anti-Jewish sentiment to be found in some of the Homilies of St. John Chrysostom. Some insight into this painful matter is provided *ex professo*, by the early Church Scholar, J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth. The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books 2nd Printing 2000, pp. 66, ff.: ...*These Homilies, with their scurrilous attacks on the Jews [he kept them up, whenever opportunity offered, throughout his career], have distressed modern readers, who have speculated how much, given the wide diffusion and popularity of his writings, they must have fuelled the cruelly repressive attitudes to Judaism adopted by later Christianity...his arguments reflect a Christian polemic which can be traced back, in east and west alike, to the late first century when the Church separated itself from the synagogue...*

In this connection, it will be very helpful to reflect prayerfully on: Pope John Paul II, *We remember: A Reflection on the SHOAH*, Letter, dated March 12, 1998; cf. Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Document: *We Remember*. March 16, 1998; cf. also International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*, [December 1, 1999 – especially # 5.4]; and the Homily of John Paul II. Mass for the Day of Pardon, March 12, 2000.

- n. 36: Examen, c. 3, n. 2:

...Was the candidate born of a legitimate marriage, or not? and if not, what were the circumstances?

Has he come from a family long Christian, or one recently converted?

Has any of his ancestors been accused or censured for errors against our Christian religion? In what manner?

Are his mother and father still alive? What are their names?

In what circumstances are they? What is their occupation and manner of living? Do they have temporal needs, or freedom from want? In what manner?

CF # 17: this is the impediment of poor health, unable to sustain the rigors of the religious state:

- n. 29: Examen, c. 2, n. 5;
- n. 44: Examen, c. 3, n. 8;
- n. 175: Part I, c. 3, n. 7;
- n. 185: Part I, c. 3, n. 15;
- n. 186: Part I, c. 3, physical defects.

CF # 18: difficult vices, hard to correct, obstinacy, or hardness which rejects discipline [will] and knowledge [intellect]:

- n. 184: Part I, c. 3, n. 14;
- n. 189: Part I, c. 3, n. 16.

CF # 19: *ineptitude*, with special reference to regular observance: chastity and obedience - perhaps hinted at in **CF # 28:**

- n. 212: the term “ineptitude” appears in the chapter on Dismissal: Part II, c. 2, n. 3:

... This cause would be present if in the course of the probation some impediments or notable defects should be discovered which the applicant failed to mention earlier during the examination; or if by experience should show that he would be highly unprofitable and hinder rather than aid the Society because of his notable incompetence for any office whatever....

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c. 2: Defects which render one less suitable [CF ## 20-24]: [This title may be drawn from CSJ n. 189]: **intelligence; will; physical; financial/civic:**

CF # 20: [cf. also **CF ## 10; 18; 25; 26]** - slowness of intelligence, defect of judgment, memory, a certain dullness, when these are notable:

- n. 47: Examen, c. 3, n. 11: the willingness to submit one's judgment;
- n. 106: Examen, c. 5, n. 3;
- nn. 154-158: Part I, c. 2, nn. 6-7;
- nn. 183-184: Part I, c. 3, nn. 13-14.

CF # 21: defects of will, habits of sin, indiscreet devotions, lack of proper disposition:

- nn. 46-48: Examen, c. 3, nn. 8-10;
- n. 156: Part I, c. 2, n. 8;
- n. 179-182: Part I, c. 3, nn. 9-12.

CF # 22: physical defects: weakness, illness, deformity; lack of bodily integrity; or proper age [cf. **CF # 9**], too young, or too old:

- n. 44: Examen, c. 3, n. 8;
- nn. 157-159, good appearance, health - Part I, c. 2, nn. 9-11;
- n. 185: Part I, c. 3, n. 15.

CF # 23: [cf. above, **CF #13**, and its references] speaks of debts, civic obligations:

- n. 196: Pars I, c. 4, n. 3 D;
- n. 593: Part VI, c.3, & 8.

CF # 24: the need of discretion and seeking divine wisdom in admissions:

- n. 190: Part I, c. 4, n. 1;
- n. 193: Part I, c. 4, n. 3;
- n. 243: Part 3, c. 1, n. 1.
- Part IV, c. 3, # 1, n. 333

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c. 3: The Characteristics needed in different Grades of Membership [CF ## 25-26]

CF # 25: The **Brothers** committed to temporal matters should have these qualities: that they be content, be of the proper age [cf. **CF # 9**], that they have sufficient strength for the work which in this kind of life they offer themselves [*se offerunt*] to live as an Oblation; and that they not be men of very slow intelligence. Their number is defined by the necessity of the work, so that they be not lazy. [cf. **CF ## 64; 78-82**].

- nn. 112- 120: Examen of the Brothers;

- nn. 117-118: that they be content in their self-oblation - Examen c.6, ## 6-7; in their Ritual of Profession, this is called *hoc holocaustum* [n. 540]³;
- nn. 148-152: Part I, c. 1, nn. 2-4 - their number restricted by the necessity; that they be not slow:

... To speak in particular of those who are admitted to become coadjutors in temporal and eternal matters. It is presupposed that they should not be more numerous than is necessary to aid the Society in occupations which the other members could not fulfill without detriment to the greater service of God. In regard to their souls these applicants ought to be men of good conscience, peaceful, docile, lovers of virtue and perfection, inclined to devotion, edifying for those inside and outside the house, content with the lot of Martha in the Society, well-disposed toward its Institute, and eager to help it for the glory of God our Lord... [n. 148].

- nn. 305-306: Part III, c. 2, n. 7, H - number determined by need;
- n. 334: Part IV, c. n. 2 - necessary in the Colleges;
- n. 433: Part IV, c. 10, H - role take by Scholastics when there are no Brothers.

CF # 26: [cf. also **CF ## 10; 64**] those committed to the **Spiritual Ministries** - a long list of positive - intellectual, those of the will, and physical qualities:

- nn. 104-112: Examen, the entire c. 5 is on the *Spiritual Coadjutors*.
- n.157: pleasing speech -Part I, c. 2, n. 9; n. 814: Part X, n. 3.
- n. 158: a pleasing [“honest”] exterior appearance-Part I, c. 2, n. 10;
- n. 159: health and strength to endure the works of the community - Part I, c. 2, # 11;
- n. 160: proper age: 14 for entrance; 25 for profession - Part I, c. 2, n. 12.
- n. 161: **NB:** Fr. Benaglia adds a line here about other gifts of fortune that are not necessary, but should be taken into consideration if the other qualifications are present.

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NB: Somewhat surprisingly, right after “Admissions”, St. Ignatius dedicates a balanced Part II, with four Chapters, nn. 204-242, to **dismissal**. Fr. Bertoni notes this in **CS # 19**, speaking of **ineptitude** [CSJ n. 212] - and **CF # 192**, under Union, “Negative Means”, expelling those who are incorrigible sowers of discord].

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³ Cf. Aa. Vv., *La vocacion del Hermano Jesuita. CG XXXIII* . Roma: CIS 1984.