

St. Gaspar Bertoni



Parte XI

[CF ## 267 - 297]

of his

Original Constitutions

A Study by

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ELEVENTH PART

FAMILIAR CONVERSATION WITH OUR NEIGHBORS WITH A VIEW TO THEIR SALVATION

[cc. 1-5, CF ## 267-297]

Presentation:

[1] These five chapters include a number of items:

c. 1: CF ## 267-270: Excessive familiarity, family ties to be avoided is already well established as in the previous Part X [On the Unity, Union of the Congregation], Section I [The Negative Means], cc. 4-6:

- Those Particular Friendships to be avoided [CF ## 208-213];
- Moderation, Discretion in loving One's Confreres [CF ## 214-217];
- How to recognize Particular Friendships [CF ## 218-220].

Here, the emphasis is much more on ***necessary separations, activism***, and the need for **caution** so that the apostolic endeavor not be squandered by excessive attachments and visits, or by being engaged in apostolates that are not directly religious.

c. 2: CF ## 271-276: On the Proper Manner of conversing with others - conversation as an apostolic tool. [Due to the wide variety of Jesuit personnel and apostolates, **conversation** was considered frequently in the Ignatian Constitutions [cf. **CSJ nn. 18, 21, 60;89; 186; 191; 197; 197; 205; 247; 249; 338; 414; 461; 496; 624, 661; 729; 814**].

c. 3: CF ## 277-281: The **Scope** of the Congregation is realized through familiar conversations.

c. 4: CF ## 282-290: Two Conditions need to be met for this to be accommodated to the Religious State.[cf. also **CF ## 185; 262; 278; 282 [Title of Part XI, c. 4]**].

c. 5: CF ## 291-297: The Manner of visiting and assisting our Neighbors in the danger of death. [This is noted in St. Ignatius in two ways:

- the training of Confreres in Spiritual Ministries [CSJ Part IV, c. 8, nn. 412-413]
- the help given to dying members and suffrages [CSJ Part VI, c. 4, nn. 595-401].

[2] Fr. Bertoni likewise often speaks of this form of apostolate:

- **in his Spiritual Diary**: there may be a hint when Fr. Bertoni writes: “It is necessary to enter into another’s house according to his manner, but to come out according to ours...”¹.
- **in his Original Constitutions**:
 - **CF # 163/2**: among the duties for the Professed, are pious dialogues and holy conversations;
 - **CF # 176**: tutoring students;
 - **CF # 250**: a form of common recreation;
 - **CF # 253**: a form of greeting guests;
 - **CF 255**: a means of fulfilling the end of the Congregation.

[3] Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, Second Superior General, and first Novice Master after the Founder himself, compiled a series of ‘**Domestic Exhortations**’ which have come down to us:

- **IV. Finis... Modus...Armi...**²: in this very open reading of the purpose of the Congregation, Fr. Lenotti shows the parallel Fr. Bertoni intended to draw between his Congregation and that of the Company of Jesus - and offers a list of possibilities in the ***quodcumque Dei verbi ministerium***: ...and this word of God, o brothers, it is necessary to learn it and to manage it well, with your studies, with the sacred lectures, and apply it well according to the circumstances: in the confessional, in the prisons, in the pulpit, at the podium, from the altars, in Retreats, the Oratories, Days of Recollection, **familiar conversations**, and the like...³.
- **On Recreations [CF # 255]**⁴: ‘...What is the scope of our vocation? Let us look for it, then, also in these **familiar conversations**, etc. What great good we can accomplish by this means! With this means what great advantages did not that great Apostolic Missionary accomplish, St. Francis Xavier! What about St. Ignatius! What great was not accomplished by St. Philip Neri, St. Alphonsus, and how many other good religious, also students, and simple

¹ cf. MP August 20, 1808. Fr. Stofella comments: “... This Ignatian saying is reported also by Rodriguez. We believe however, that it has its true context in *The Life of St. Ignatius*, by Bartoli, Book IV, n. 20: ‘One of the most fruitful arts that the Saint employed was that of leaving his neighbors to God, which was achieved by treating of the truths pertaining to the soul in ordinary every-day conversation... This, the Saint called, *one of the most proper means of the Company*... [cf. CS IV, fasc. 1, pp. 38, ff.]

² cf. CS III, fasc. 3, pp. 408-411.

³ l.c., p. 410.

⁴ cf. l.c., p. 531.

lay-brothers! Our Fr. Biadego, conversing with the young students: he would stand at the door, or students would come up to him, one by one, along the street. And Brother Paul Zanoli in 1849 and 1850, how many soldiers then bivouacked at the Stimate did he not lead to make a good confession, and they would then go to Holy Communion on the Feast Days! The people of the world might enter according to their own means, but it is necessary to have them leave by our expertise...

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[A] Ignatian Influence

*The Conversational Word of God*⁵ indicates that simple and friendly conversation about spiritual topics, with individuals or groups, was one of the chief means of apostolic ministry employed by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his early companions. This ministry penetrated, and under-girded all the other more visible activities to which the success of the early Society is most often attributed. The following is a synthesis of this study.

[1.] Spiritual Conversation is a Ministry of the Word of God⁶: some spiritual writers teach that spiritual conversation is simply a means of encouragement and advancement for those gifted with mystical prayer. Ignatius experienced this personally - but, went on to develop spiritual conversation as a means of the apostolate, an aspect of the Ministry of the Word of God, a privileged means of preaching the good news. In his listing of the various means the Society uses, such as: good example, prayers and holy desires, the administration of the Sacraments, sermons and instruction in Christian doctrine, both inside and outside of church, and finally: *They will endeavor to be profitable to individuals by **spiritual conversations**, and exhorting to good works, and by conducting the Spiritual Exercises* [cf. CSJ,n. 648].

There are developments today in biblical and kerygmatic theology: as we spoke of 'preaching' the Gospel, today is more 'proclaiming, heralding, evangelizing.' The Council teaches; *Hearing the word of God with reverence and **proclaiming** it confidently, this most sacred Synod...* [DV 1]. The 'minister' of the Word of God is a herald who proclaims it - this idea conveys better that action of the OT Prophets who were 'the Mouth of Yahweh'. John the Baptist went about proclaiming a baptism of repentance [cf. Lk 3:1, ff.]. This is Jesus' activity that Sabbath day, when he read from

⁵ Thomas H. Clancy, SJ, *The Conversational Word of God. A Commentary on the Doctrine of St. Ignatius of Loyola concerning Spiritual Conversation, with Four Early Jesuit Texts.* Series IV, Study Aids on Jesuit Topics, Number 8. St. Louis 1978: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1978.

⁶ o.c., pp. 3-7, passim.

Isaiah about being anointed by the Lord, bringing the Good News to the Poor, proclaiming liberty [cf. Lk 4:16-21].

Most of the Gospels portray Jesus as having power and authority as a Teacher. His efforts seem far more conversational, than declamatory. He spends much time with individuals, or with small groups. This is particularly clear in the Fourth Gospel, a series of one-on-one encounters with Andrew, Peter, Mary, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and many others. The deeds of Jesus are also an essential part of his proclamation, 'preaching': **He went about doing good** [cf. **Ac 10:38**].

The People of God have always been encouraged by this intimate side of Jesus, the Good Shepherd - Who knows His, and His know him. The ministry of the Word of God is carried out in many ways. Each Christian is a missionary, called to convey the Good News. And for most, the ordinary means of doing this are good example and daily conversation. From his own conversion, Ignatius discovered this as a most valid means for spreading the Gospel.

One of the great Jesuits of their early history was Jeronimo NADAL: trained personally by Ignatius, and on personal terms with the early members, through conversations and conferences, he was able to share in depth the original idea of Ignatius. In the **quodcumque Verbi Dei ministerium** would be included certainly this ministry of **the Conversational Word of God**.

2. The Steps in Spiritual Conversation ⁷:

- **Natural Endowment:** there are also natural gifts to be employed in the Apostolic Mission *...the human and acquired means ought to be sought with diligence, especially well-grounded and solid learning, and a method of proposing it to the people, by means of sermons, lectures, and the art of dealing and conversing with them...* [cf. CSJ, nn. 812-813]. For this work, there is needed in the Ignatian style young men, with some education, who were alert with pleasing personalities. The vocation directors looked for those who had a pleasing manner of speaking [cf. CSJ n. 142].

Every person in the Company of Jesus, from the least of the brothers, to the *cupola* of the community, would be charged to aid his neighbors with spiritual conversation - Coadjutor Brothers [n. 115]; Scholastics [n. 349]; Spiritual Coadjutors [n. 461]; those sent on important Missions, the 'Professed' [n. 624]; the Procurator General [n. 806]; the Secretary [n. 802], and the 'Praepositus' General himself [n. 729]. Here is a Constitution that encouraged all:

⁷ o.c., pp. 14-34, *passim*.

There may be someone of such an age, or ability, that he needs only the Latin language and as much of the other faculties as is necessary to hear confessions and deal with his neighbors. Of this type, perhaps, will be some of those who have a curacy of souls and are not capable of great learning. On the other hand, there may be others who will progress farther in the sciences, although to judge to what extent it is expedient to drop some branches and take up others will belong to the superior. After he has explained this to the students from outside the Society, and if they still desire to proceed differently, they should not be coerced [CSJ n. 461].

The bare minimum required was to be able to hear Confessions, ***and deal with his neighbors***. This would be the absolute minimum for a Jesuit - yet, this ministry, as is noted above, was asked of all.

- **Modesty:** we might translate this, too, as a good presence, poise. Ignatius was much concerned with external appearances: the gait, and bearing should communicate one's internal peace and humility, the fruit of profound apostolic faith. Ignatius, an old soldier, was convinced that there is a 'body language' - this might explain the Saint's insistence on posture and external appearance in prayer, in community, in the apostolate. Sad, disheartened catechists, apostolic missionaries, can do little to communicate or proclaim the Word of God. In this regard, and in addition to his ***Rules of Modesty***, St. Ignatius offers this remarkable Constitution:

All should take special care to guard with great diligence:

- [1] the gates of their senses, especially the eyes, ears, and tongue, from all disorder;
- [2] to preserve themselves in peace and true internal humility;
- [3] to give an indication of it by silence when it is to be kept;
 - [a] when they must speak, by the discretion and edification of their words, the modesty of their countenance, the maturity of their walk and all their movements;
 - [b] without giving any sign of impatience or pride. In everything they should try and desire to give the advantage to others, esteeming them all in their hearts, as if better than themselves;
 - [c] and showing externally in an unassuming and simple religious manner, the respect and reverence befitting each one's state –

- [1] in such a manner that by observing one another they may grow in devotion;
- [2] and praise God our Lord, whom each should endeavor -
- [3] to recognize in his neighbor as in His image...
[CSJ n. 250].

In the Ignatian heart, there is an intimate tie between *modesty* and the ministry of spiritual conversation. He hoped that others would be drawn by the Missionary who showed his inner peace by exterior composure.

- **Zeal and Love for Neighbor:** as the Benedictines would ask candidates how sincere was their desire for God, Ignatius wanted **men of hope**, desirous of all virtue and spiritual perfection, energetic in whatever enterprise of the divine service they undertake and zealous for the salvation of souls [cf. CSJ n. 156]. The new candidates must have this quality [n. 101] - as well as the veterans in the total service of the Church [n. 638] - rectors of colleges [n. 424] - and the General himself should never lose that vision [n. 790]. There is much need of a motivating hope - the **apostolic mission** is a reality for which one should be willing to offer his entire life, all his gifts and energies. Ignatius' zeal on the practical level was geared for his fellow man - he developed the habit of striving first to see the good in others, over whatever defects one might have had.
- **Selection:** with the wide-open apostolic mission, it is important that discernment be highly developed in the community - of candidates, of the means to employ them, the ministries most needed at any given juncture of Church life. Within his Constitutions, those in and around n. 622 help greatly in this discernment process - it **was all for the greater good of souls, service of the Church, Glory of God:**

... The more universal the good is, the more divine. Therefore, preference ought to be given those persons and places, which, through their own improvement, become a cause that can spread the good accomplished to many others who are under their influence or take guidance from them.

For that reason, the spiritual aid which is given to important and public persons ought to be regarded as more important, since it is a more universal good. This is true whether these persons are laymen such as princes, lords, magistrates, or ministers of justice - or whether they are clerics such as prelates. The same also holds true of the spiritual aid which is given to persons distinguished for learning and

authority, because of that reason of its being the more universal good...[CSJ, n. 622].

This was Ignatius' main method of vocational recruitment early on - with the passing of time, he would use this approach with authorities, both civil and ecclesial, and eventually potential benefactors. He also constantly directed his 'own' not to get in over their heads. He also was the object of two major objections: male chauvinism, and a certain elitism. In response, one thought is that most women of his time were already church-goers - he was more after the high and the mighty. Hugo Rahner has made clear that many of Ignatius' most ardent supporters were women⁸, so many today would say that the Saint was a man of his times and also wrote out of caution.

Social snobbery - and concentration on the endowed classes - also seem a 'natural' criticism against a group always looking for what is the 'greater.' The real emphasis, though, in the Saint's heart, is the ever greater honor and glory of God - this is the bottom line of the entire endeavor, as the extraordinary dynamism that the history of the Company of Jesus would clearly indicate: from the point of view of missions, universities, and excellent service.

Since avarice is a constant temptation of Church people, Ignatius prescribed the antidote of both the spiritual and corporal works of mercy for Jesuit communities. As it turned out, some of the best recruits were from the ordinary, or lower classes of society. In his apostolic choices, he was extremely pragmatic - what would work to the greater advantage for the wider number of souls?

- **Going in by his door:** as noted above, this principle is quite familiar to Stigmatines who have read St. Gaspar Bertoni's Spiritual Diary⁹. The early Jesuits remember this as an oft-repeated Ignatian principle in engaging in spiritual conversations. It is a paraphrasing of St. Paul's ideal: ***I become all things to all men so as to win all to Christ...*** [cf. **1 Co 9:22**]. Talk with others about what we may have in common - use whatever means one can to win their confidence. A kind of trump card in such conversations would be to present ***De Novissimis: death, heaven, purgatory... hell***. If one cannot introduce such serious subject matter into the conversation, it may be that the other may not be ready yet.
- **Patience and Self-control:** one of the great arts of life is to learn how to listen, as Fr. Bertoni so clearly noted in his Constitutions **CF # 255**: with the old adage, the Creator has given us two ears, and only one tongue - that we might learn to listen at least twice as much as we talk. The best conversationalist is the person who speaks little and the best counseling has to be client-centered. To keep silent and to listen requires much self-control and discipline. Silence is

⁸ Hugo Rahner, *St. Ignatius Loyola, Letters to Women* [New York 1960].

⁹ cf. *MP*, August 20, 1808.

part of the experience of the ***Spiritual Exercises*** - and an important part, with separation, of the Novitiate. Without some effort at silence, for Ignatius, genuine apostolic abnegation would prove to be very difficult. His would advise: be slow to speak, and only after having first listened quietly, so that you may understand the meanings and the leanings and desires of those who speak.

- **Deeds as well as Words:** spiritual conversations are all part of a long, repeated campaign - the great St. Ignatius 'pursued' St. Francis Xavier and Jerome Nadal for years. Dealing with others for their spiritual profit requires a certain amount of resourcefulness in deeds as well as in words. The language spoken by good example, by witness, is the most effective and the most easily understood. A good motto might be that of the old politician: "Always leave them laughing when you say 'good-by'!" St. Ignatius put it: "Whenever possible, see to it that no one goes away from you sad."
- **Coming out by our Door:** for Ignatius himself, there was an intimate connection between spiritual conversations and his ***Spiritual Exercises*** - either whole, or in part. Some have seen a certain trilogy in Ignatius: **spiritual conversations = confession = retreat** ...[and for some, the book of the Jesuit ***Constitutions!***]. The culminating retreat would simply be to replace a spiritual conversation, open to random inspirations of the Holy Spirit, with a planned conversation which follows a pattern, more or less determined, in advance. The good listener is a rare bird, and he might not be - and often is not - a good talker. The opposite is also true: those who are glib may not have the patience to listen. If the Missionary does not have the talent for conversation he should not be sent on a mission, unless the one who may accompany him, is precisely that. It soon becomes very clear that in this broad apostolic missionary program, different confreres need to be selected for different challenges: for the Jesuit Founder, greater skill and learning seem to be necessary for the ministry of conversation. For the 'discernment', selection of confreres needed to send on the Apostolic Mission, St. Ignatius offers very interesting guidelines:

...

- [e] to treat with cultivated persons of talent and learning, those are more suitable who likewise have a special gift of skill and learning. For these persons can be more successful in lectures and conversations.
- [f] For the ordinary people, those will generally be most apt who have a talent for preaching, hearing confessions and the like.
- [g] The number and combination of such laborers who are to be sent should also receive consideration. First of all, it would be wise when possible that one member should not be sent alone. At least two should be sent, that thus they may be

more helpful to one another in spiritual and bodily matters and also, by distributing among themselves the labors in the service of their neighbor, but more profitable to those to whom they are sent.

- [h] And if two are sent, it seems that with a preacher, or lecturer, there could well go another who in confessions and spiritual exercises could gather in the harvest which the speaker proposes for him, and who could aid the speaker by conversations and the other means used in dealing with our neighbor.
- [i] Likewise, when one less experienced in the Society's *manner of proceeding* and of dealing with the neighbor is sent, it seems that he ought to be accompanied by another who has more experience in that procedure, whom he can imitate, with whom he can confer, and from whom he can take counsel in the perplexing matters he encounters... [cf. CSJ n. 624].

This Constitution speaks of the ***Jesuit manner of proceeding*** - as well as a **gradual breaking in, through the 'apostolic progress'** of the Missionaries, progress in their acceptance of the Apostolic Mission. The emphasis through the years was of the one who 'planted', and the other who would 'harvest' - a combination of sermon and spiritual conversation.

- **Review and Improvement:** throughout St. Ignatius' plan there is a **progressive, dynamic** element [***profectus***] for spirituality, as well as for the Apostolic Mission. He emphasizes throughout an on-going formation - the notions of review, examination, and growth. Fr. Bertoni often uses the word ***profectus***, a continuing progress is the ideal. As St. Ignatius insisted on repetitions and examinations in academics, so he wanted these adapted for the ministry of the Word of God - an example of this is given with Ignatius' view of the supervision needed for the young Jesuit members:

The Rector ought himself to explain or teach Christian Doctrine for 40 days. He should also consider which of his subjects ought to deal with their neighbors inside the house, or outside of it, and for what length of time they should do this, in spiritual conversations, conducting exercises, hearing confessions, and also in preaching or lecturing, or in teaching Christian Doctrine. They should do this work partly to gain practice themselves, especially when they are near the end of their studies, and partly for the fruit which will be reaped by the others within and without the house. After pondering all the factors, the rector should in everything provide what he thinks to be more

pleasing to the Divine and Supreme Goodness and for His grater service and glory [CSJ n. 437].

In the early days of the Society's history, the last means to improve one's spiritual conversations and method of dealing with their neighbors, was to stay in touch with Ignatius, by means of letters. The vital role of encouragement is also to be mutually shared for the Apostolic Mission.

[3] Testimonies of Early Jesuits on the Conversational Word of God:

- Jeronimo Nadal¹⁰:

[22] It is a great grace in the Church of God, and a high office, to be a minister of God's Word; and this is a thing we should try to grasp with heart and mind, brethren. Christ is the Infinite word of God and we are the ministers of this Word, for it is He Who sends us, He who teaches us, He who gives our lives meaning, Who gives us the grace to receive this message and knows that it comes from him. He makes His word work in us and endows our work with the savor of charity and with divine enthusiasm. We cannot plumb the depths of the Ministry of the Word, we can only begin to grasp its inner meaning by the grace of Christ.

The chief duties of this ministry are sermons and sacred lectures, or conferences, as we said above. And yet, the whole sense of the ministry of God's Word is summed up in our fervent spirit. We cannot grasp the totality of this Ministry if we pass over its other aspects. Something similar frequently occurs in Holy Scripture when a part that is to come is anticipated. But what are those aspects of the ministry of the Word, that we have treated up to now only implicitly?

[23] The first aspect is private spiritual conversation, which is an excellent method of helping our neighbor. Ignatius used to say that this ministry teaches us important things. What preachers and lecturers proclaim from on high, we ought to try to suggest quietly to individuals. And in this latter ministry there is a greater liberty and effectiveness because one can fit the words to the disposition and reaction of the individual. And if we are men dedicated to Christ we will not fail to win souls with this method, by His grace.

[24] Peter Favre, one of the first companions of Ignatius, was one of those apostles who had a special talent in this ministry. He had an extraordinary charm in spiritual conversation, for Pierre Favre never met a

¹⁰ cf. *P. Hieronymi Nadal. Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu*. Edidit Michael Nicolau, SI. Romae: MHSI 1962. Chapter IV, *Et aliud quodcumque Verbi Dei Ministerium*, ## 22-27, pp. 832-837. English translation in: Thomas H. Clancy, SJ, *The Conversational Word of God*, o.c., pp. 52-56.

man, no matter how far gone, who was not totally changed by dealing with him. Father Ignatius used to say that Pierre could draw water from a stone¹¹.

Another Jesuit who stood out in this ministry was Father Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies and Japan. Ignatius himself was one of the best in this sphere of drawing his neighbors toward God. His burning zeal for their eternal salvation and his gift of discernment and divine tact enabled him with a few winning words to endear himself to everyone he met. He got to know men so well that he worked wonders with them. It was as if he could peer into a man's soul; and when he spoke, men had to admit that he knew them better than they knew themselves. On top of all this there was a kind of heavenly glow about him when he spoke of the things of God, which had a striking effect on those present.

[25] Ignatius was able to do great things through this ministry of God's Word. First of all, it was this gift that enabled him to recruit his first nine companions. In some cases this ministry requires more skill than preaching. And yet it is the special quality of the conversational apostolate to quietly and slowly to win over his neighbor, to deal with him gently and light the flame of charity in his heart. Let me tell you what I know about this ministry from Father Ignatius himself.

What I will tell you he taught not only by word, but also by example. The first thing to do is to concentrate one's heart and soul in loving the person you want to aid. Even though the person in question was a hardened sinner, he found something in him to love, his natural gifts, his belief in God, and any other good things about him. He would concentrate on these things, on his good works, or - in the case of necessity - on the good works he did in the past; and he would point them out to others and discourse on them lovingly. He would test his zeal for the salvation of this soul against all the factors tending in the other direction, especially the evil spirit, who is the source and cause of all vices. He thought one should find out everything possible about the person, his present and past station in life, his intelligence, his physical makeup, his temperament, whether it was choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine, or melancholy, his past and present deeds. He inquired about all these things, so that he could anticipate his needs and disposition.

He further insisted that at the beginning of the encounter there be no talk of sins to be avoided or virtues to be acquired. Rather, the conversation should begin naturally. With a soldier one talks of war, with a merchant about his business, with a noble about government, or political affairs of his country, with a clergyman about news of the Church and its government. So one should discuss with a man the things that hold an interest for him or that he wants to talk about, and one should follow his lead even into secular topics as long as the conversation is blameless.

¹¹ NB: play on words in Latin: *Petrus educit de petra aquam*

[26] But in these exchanges one should watch carefully for an occasion to give the conversation a religious turn. Father Ignatius used to speak of this method as *entering by their door so as to come out by our door*. He was not in favor of launching forth immediately on virtues and vices, the life of Christ, and the last things, because in this way our hearers never really get interested in what we are saying, but are rendered inattentive by our untimely zeal. And even after we have their attention we should not move directly to the reasons why sin should be shunned, but rather, after chatting about politics and news, we should move onto the deeds of holy men, the life of Christ, his teachings and death, and the various good habits. Only after that should we shift our attention to the detestation of bad habits in general. As for the personal problems of our friend we should wait for him to bring up the subject. Only then can we broach this topic without offense. Father Favre used to say that in some cases the whole matter of a long and detailed discussion of a man's sins should be avoided.

If our friend never broaches the subject of his personal problems one can certainly find an opportunity to urge him to make a good confession, or even a general confession, to frequent the sacraments, to learn more about prayer, and to do works of charity with the motive of serving God. It sometimes happens that a man is frequently in our company and yet, never gets to the point where he is willing to talk of the things of God bearing on the salvation of his soul. With such a person the best course is not waste time on trivia even though that is what he wants to discuss, but to turn the talk about hell, the last judgment, the horrible fate of sinners, and the hidden judgments of God. This will either lead him to a different field of interest or send him away annoyed so that he will not come back to waste our time.

[27] These are but a few hints. There are no hard and fast rules. Circumstances of time and place, and the character and temperament of the person involved, might indicate another approach. The resourceful apostle will be guided by a holy tact in all conversations.

This ministry is especially helpful after sermons or religious conferences, when good aspirations have been planted in the minds of the hearers and they are ready to listen to spiritual considerations and profit from them.

Spiritual conversation is very useful in our schools. Both priests and non-priests who have this gift of talking of godly things can lead our students not only to a more intense life with God, but even plant the seed of a Jesuit vocation in the souls of selected youths.

This ministry is also very useful when we meet men in the street or in public places. It is not difficult to get to know them and gradually bring them around to go to confession. In Rome excellent results were obtained in this fashion. A brother might meet a merchant from the country who had come to Rome on business and teach him how to examine his conscience and confess his sins and finally persuade him to go to confession.

We should exercise this ministry not only directly, but indirectly; that is, we should urge our penitents and the friends with whom we dialogue to learn the art of spiritual conversation themselves, so that they may help members of their families and household, their friends and relatives. Women can thus aid other women. But we should not urge this ministry for men and women together unless they be marriage partners so as to avoid the last hint of scandal.

[28] This ministry can also be practiced communally, as a kind of mixture of the sermon and spiritual conference on the one hand, and of an individual dialogue on the other. For example, a group might gather to talk of godly things together with someone presiding. We started something like this in Messina, Sicily, when we started the college there, but, in a very rough fashion. Almost every day a few good laymen who used to frequent our confessionals and attend our spiritual conferences would meet in the church., One of them brought a spiritual book which he read while the others listened. Sometimes they would simply discuss holy topics together. I hear that this died out after a time. Later on in Rome there was a group of secular priests dedicated to St. Jerome which did something similar. They would meet in a large room, to listen to a short exhortation by one of their number. The speaker was designated by the priest in charge and he would either be a priest attached to the parish or one of the others. When he had finished he sometimes answered questions about the matter presented. Sometimes they prayed together, often for intentions suggested by the times. The meeting would close with a hymn, led by the singer among them.

We had a similar set up at the college in Genoa, but I seem to remember that the General had some objection to it. Still it remains our custom in Rome, in both the Roman College and the German College, to organize sodalities among the students, where spiritual colloquies are held with a Jesuit in charge. Certainly I would think that this kind of ministry would be ideal for our houses, especially the professed houses. Naturally, we should follow any policies laid down for this apostolate, but I would hope that we could reap a rich harvest for Christ in the future by this means...

[Stigmatines might find their own history in this very familiar territory: the community itself seems to have begun this way. Fr. Bertoni would gather a few like-minded men for **theological, prayerful discussions** in his own home, for retreats together, for prayer. This seems to be the style of the **Oratories** he founded, to build the Church for the future. It might be noted that perhaps in these spiritual conversations, one might note not only the Passion and Death of the Lord, but also His Resurrection and Ascension, - and not only the four last things, but also the content of Pope John Paul II's great Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*. There is also in this the apostolic wisdom of Fr. Bertoni:

CF # 277: First of all to fulfill perfectly the office of confessor, it is often necessary to treat in a friendly manner with penitents even outside of their confession...¹²]

St. Peter Canisius, Letter to Fr. Claudio Aquaviva, Praepositus General - January 1583¹³ :

... Everyone of Ours who has entered the Society should so live therein that he feels in himself a special attraction for Christian charity, joined to a burning zeal for souls which is evident to all whenever an opportunity presents itself. This will always remain our special obligation. In fact, we have no other end or objective than this: with the grace of God to pursue not only our own salvation and perfection, but also the salvation and perfection of our neighbor. That is why we are obliged to love all men of all nations in sincere charity, to serve them, and to become all things to everyone, as far as possible, in order to win them to Christ...

It is Christ Himself, our Lord and Master, who became our way, truth and life, who urges and spurs us on to this singular love burning with zeal for the salvation of men. The Apostles who followed Christ to become fishers of men, likewise urge us; as do our first Fathers who, under the leadership of blessed Ignatius, in our Society made themselves masters of the art of dealing with me and commended this same splendid and practical art as the thing most characteristic of our Society... Now, let us proceed [after these few words of introduction] to the main topic:

1. ...It often happens that we must still arouse in ourselves and really feel a vigorous yearning to give ourselves to the task, placing however our hopes of success not in ourselves, but in the help of our Creator and Redeemer. As the Psalmist says: *Unless God builds the house they labor in vain who build it...*
2. If you want to help others by your conversations, you should take the means necessary to make yourself an instrument closely joined to God [*instrumentum conjunctum cum Deo*], your Sovereign Creator, and capable of being used by Him. These means are a taste for solid virtue and spiritual things, a pure intention to serve God alone, a special familiarity with God in exercises of piety, a sincere zeal for souls, especially love which ought to burn in the heart of him who

¹² NB: this Constitution is from Suraez, Book IX, c. 5, p. 1046 b.

¹³ cf. Thomas H. Clancy, SJ, *The Conversational Word of God*, o.c., pp. 57, ff.

wishes to set others on fire... Nothing is truer than Christ's words:
....He who abides in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit.

3. ...Thus, the Apostles, including Paul, join to their preaching insistent prayer; and they urged their faithful to join in the same prayer... And prayer not only brings results in the apostolate, it also preserves and adds to them and brings them to perfection *Ask and you shall receive*, says Eternal Truth, *so that your joy may be complete...*
8. ... Lovingly, St. Francis Xavier persevered in his apostolic nagging leading his neighbor to more and more profound distaste for his old way of life until he was truly and completely sorry for his sins. Xavier thus brought safely into the port of salvation many a human wreck tossed by the waves of perdition. We are in desperate need of many such doctors of life, endowed as was Xavier with apostolic skills both human and divine, men who are ready and willing to deal with the well and the ill, and skillful enough to convert the most hardened sinners to a better life....
9. ...Fishing in the sea of this world does not always fulfill our desires or expectations. The catch is sometimes out of all proportion to the labor expended by the apostle. This will happen to you. Then is the time to rely on that charity which is 'patient and kind, which sustains, believes, hopes, endures to the last.' Then, even the difficulties and the storms will work together for the good of those who love. Then virtue will work together for the good of those who love. Then virtue will be made perfect in weakness, and in patience, which is always a part of perfect works, the fruit will become more abundant.
10. Another thing that will be a great source of encouragement for you is to call frequently to mind that you are an agent not only of the superior, but of Christ, our Lord. The man on a mission does not rest but faithfully takes care of the interests of his Master. He spends all his time and takes advantage of every opportunity to increase the profit and good name of his Master...
11. ...In such a manner does the Father [Favre] propose as a model for the zealous and devoted Missionary of Christ not only his own example, but that of Christ our Lord. The Missionary must be a servant of the Lord who is devoted to the greater glory of God, who knows not the meaning of idleness who is burning with zeal and intent on the task of winning men to God He must put aside all timidity and self-doubt, and go for the interests of Christ not his own, and that whether he is dealing with many men or a small number. Such was the charge of the Lord Jesus when He gave out the talents to His servants and told them: *trade with these while I am away.*

That is, give them back to the Lord not simply with interest, but with profit. Or again, be faithful in little things so as to be put in charge of more important matters...

12. ...Really how sad and pitiful is the condition of those who, having been called to be fishers of men, find themselves instead to be cold fish. Such an attitude runs squarely counter to that rule so characteristic of the Society: They ought to try to further the greater interior progress of their neighbors by spiritual conversations, by counseling, and exhorting to good works, especially to confession... When they speak they must be mindful of modesty and edification, as well as in their words, as in the style and manner of speaking...
13. Finally, to sum all this up. The man who wishes to aid his neighbor in his dealings and conversations must carefully establish his own priorities. First, should be the most pressing tasks and those ordered by superiors. He should know how to start out in humble encounters and gradually work up to more important ones. He should follow the rules of those sent on Mission, namely, that we should always strive in the ministries for the greater glory of God and the more effective aid of our neighbor...

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[B] St. Gaspar Bertoni
[Pars XI: CF, cc. 1-5, ## 267-297]

Presentation:

The title for the **Eleventh Part** of Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions is: **The Familiar Conversation with our Neighbors with a View to Their Salvation** This is based on the work of Fr. Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu, Book IX [The Means, or Ministries, which the Society employs for the Salvation of Externs]*, c. 8: *Whether the Religious of the Society should converse familiarly with their Neighbors, in order to help them*¹⁴. This would cover **chapters 1-4** of this **11th Part [CF ## 267-290]** - for chapter 5 **[CF ## 291-297]**, the main source is the next Chapter 9 of this work of Suarez *[The Means of the Particular Care to be extended toward our Neighbors in the Danger of Death]*¹⁵.

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¹⁴ cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1045 a, ff.

¹⁵ o.c., pp. 1051 b, ff.

c. 1: That Familiarity that should be avoided [CF ## 267-270]

This Chapter 1 is introduced by Suarez with the danger that such conversations with seculars can greatly impede one's progress on the way to perfection, which is the central purpose for religious. The Jesuit theologian makes clear that this statement is simply the result of the experience of the instituting Fathers of the various religious orders, and quotes one of the principal founders of religious life. And other than these opening two sentences, practically the rest of the n. 1 of this Chapter 9 in Suarez, entitled "The Reason for the Negative Part" - serves as the wording for this Chapter 1 - where some of the dangers of such conversations and the need for the proper safeguards are outlined. These are actually 'authorities' from tradition used as objections to the title of this Chapter, showing that such conversations are alien to the state of perfection:

CF # 267: St. Basil states: 'Unless we remove ourselves totally from those ties imposed on us by family, and that familiar dealing with seculars, and transfer ourselves as into another world, in no way will we be able to attend to the purpose of the spiritual life [Rul. 5 and 13, from those Longer].

CF # 268: The same Saint says further [*In Const. Mon.*, c. 7]: 'It is up to us to take every care that only after having employed every diligence and circumspection should we commit ourselves to dealing with secular externs.'

CF # 269: Suarez' text continues that all of this is confirmed by experience: It often follows that from such familiarity with seculars, it becomes often then necessary to visit them, and then to be visited by them in turn: both, however, are contrary to the cloister of religious, which all the fathers recommend.

CF # 270: And because of this it also happens that religious often entangle themselves in secular matters, contrary to that precept of St. Paul **2 Tm 2:9**: ***No man, being a soldier to God, entangles himself with secular businesses.***

The example of the **Apostles** will be noted just ahead [cf. **CF # 273**].

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c. 2: The Correct Manner of conversing with our Neighbors [CF ## 271-276]

These next Constitutions offer a two-fold assertion, showing that this means: first, that of conversing familiarly with our neighbors of its very nature is not alien to the state of perfection; and secondly, that, in accord with the institute of the Society of Jesus, it is very proper to it. To establish the first point that this is indeed a proper means for the salvation of others and in accord with the state of perfection, this comprises **Chapter 2 [CF ## 271-276]**. The response to the second assertion is found further ahead, and will comprise Fr. Bertoni's **Chapter 3** here: ***How we achieve the Scope of the Congregation through Familiar Conversation*** [cf. **CF ## 277-**

281]. However, two conditions need to be met - and this will be **Chapter 4: *The Two Conditions by which this Means is accommodated to the Religious State*** [cf. **CF ## 282-290**].

Chapter 2 here is made up of a series of '*authorities*':

- the example of **Jesus Christ** [# 271];
- the example of the **Apostles** [# 272];
- **Leo III, & the Council of Mainz** [# 273];
- **Athanasias' Life of Antony of the Desert** [also in Surius] [# 274];
- **Theodoretus speaks about the same Saint Antony of the Desert** [# 275];
- **Basil and the ancient Monks** [# 276].

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CF # 271: Let there be proposed to each one the example of Christ the Lord, Who so set up His life that He would converse with other human beings, and would eat and drink with them, as is evident from the Gospel¹⁶. Nevertheless, with this He not only maintained perfection, but also adhered to the most perfect state of life - [as Suarez established earlier in Book II, Part III, disp. 28, sect. 1 & 2].

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CF # 272: In like manner, there is the example of the Apostles, whom, we know conducted a religious life and one of perfection [cf. Bk I, c. 5, n. 6]¹⁷, and nonetheless it is evident that they had conversed familiarly with others, *and became all things to all that they might gain all*¹⁸.

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CF # 273: The next example quoted is the authority of Pope Leo IIIrd, in the Council of Mainz, c. 14:

Hence, although the Council of Mainz¹⁹, under Leo III stated: 'Ministers of the altar, as well as monks, should totally abstain from secular affairs' - it later adds: 'However, no just business is to be contradicted that is taken up on account of different needs, which we read that the Holy Apostles themselves had conducted.'

'So, we rightly conclude from this handling of business on the part of the Apostles regarding the salvation of souls, and with this end in mind, to converse with

¹⁶ Fr. Bertoni does not include Suarez' source here: *ut ex Evangelio constat...* [cf. Suarez, p. 1045 a]

¹⁷ cf. Suarez, pp. 584 a & b, f.

¹⁸ NB: this is close to 1 Co 9:19.

¹⁹ c. 14.

our neighbors, in accord with the rules of the Congregation, is not contrary to the religious state.’

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CF # 274: This mode of acting is then confirmed by the example of the ancient monks, who even though they professed the solitary life, were committed to this apostolate, as follows:

‘The monks of old deserted solitude that they might deal with their others, whenever they thought it was necessary for their neighbors. Thus, it is read in the biography of the Divine Antony written by St. Athanasias, and found in Surius. It is stated there that for the sake of human beings, he was accustomed of going into the cities ²⁰. He stated: ‘Indeed many who were gravely concerned, asked him to take up their situation before the magistrates and the principal men of the city.’

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CF # 275: Theodoretus [in Bk 4, Hist., cc. 24 & 26] adds his testimony regarding St. Antony: Leaving his solitude, he would go through the entire city [Alexandria], where he would instruct all.’ He relates such activities regarding many others.

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CF # 276: Basil here in his longer rule, refers to **Col 4:6**, which rounds out the quote: **... Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt: that you may know how to answer every man.**

St. Basil [in his shorter rule, in 311] asks whether it is fitting for the monks to go out and visit others, responds: Most assuredly the office of visiting others is one of those apostolates which are pleasing to God. However, the one who exercises this endeavor ought to be very capable of understanding, and prudent in responding, and to do this in accord with this statement: **Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt: that you may know how to answer every man [Col 4:6]** ²¹.

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c. 3: How we achieve the Scope of the Congregation through Familiar Conversation ²² [CF ## 277-281]

²⁰ Cf. Suarez here, p. 1045 b, where he presents the plural: *civitates*.

²¹ For this Chapter 2, cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1045 b, f.

²² For this Chapter 3, cf. Suarez, o.c., nn. 5 & 6, and CSJ nn. 648; 349; 115.

Here Suarez takes up the effort to show that this particular ministry does indeed pertain to the Company of Jesus - after having shown by authority, that it was the manner of Jesus' own ministry, that of the Apostles, and also the early monks - and that great model of contemplation, St. Antony of the Desert. To show that these conversations are indeed the ministry of the Society of Jesus, Suarez refers back to his Book I, of this Treatise "On the Religious Life of the Society", c. 2 entitled: "The End of this Religious Institute"²³. The Jesuit theologian discusses the purpose of the Society and points out that it is not only the salvation of the members of the Company themselves, but that the Community needs also to commit itself to that of their fellow human beings. Such a scope is not separated from the "primary" and "adequate" end of the community. To achieve this goal the ministry of dealing and conversing with their fellow human beings is most accommodated and morally necessary, as is evident of itself, and as experiences clearly teaches. At least three reasons for this statement are now given, by analyzing some of the principal ministries to which the Society is committed in its history:

- first, in the area of **Sacramental Confession**, the Confessor needs to deal with penitents in a friendly manner [# 277];
- secondly, general **sermons** and **lectures** are not always understood and may easily be forgotten, or not fully grasped. Thus, their material must be further explained individually to those interested [# 278];
- thirdly, there is a rather 'negative' view of seculars being little inclined to spirituality - and this can be rectified also **by private conversations** [# 279].

For this next Constitution of his Chapter 3 **# 280**, Fr. Bertoni synthesizes a number of Jesuit Constitutions applying the various levels of the commitment to the Apostolic Mission to this task: priests, students, novices and brothers - are all committed according to their circumstances. This is an example of the 'abandonment of the personnel' to the Mission, ***quicumque*** - to some extent, **each and every member**.

The final Constitution **# 281** there are some prudential cautions regarding the ministry among women.

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CF # 277: In the first place, to handle the office of Confessor in a perfect manner, it is often necessary to treat the penitents in a familiar manner also outside of their confession. This is either for their better instruction; or their spiritual consolation; or for conserving them if the practice of frequently confessing and in those good works which spring from this Sacrament.

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CF # 278: Then, because general sermons, or lectures, although they are necessary for the community, unless they are developed further in a holy manner in

²³ o.c., pp. 554, ff.

the warmth of familiar conversation, and digested, as it were, are easily forgotten. Moreover, it is often necessary to descend from that generality to the manner and measure and particular circumstances, and accommodated to each one, which ought to be done most especially in private conversations.

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CF # 279: ‘Lastly, because seculars very often act more in accord with their animal nature than with their spiritual character, it is necessary to condescend somewhat to them, and to attract them and win them over by becoming, familiar conversation, so that little by little they might be inclined toward spiritual sermons.

For although at times indifferent matters might be mixed in, if these are accepted with this intention, or rather tolerated, they will not be time wasted, but be useful and religious.’

[And Suarez concludes here that for these reasons the Society makes use of this means as proper to itself for the salvation of their neighbors].

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CF # 280: This next Constitution seems to be Fr. Bertoni’s summary of a variety of St. Ignatius’ Constitutions [nn. 648; 349; 115 which quotes Si; and 116], as presented by Fr. Suarez²⁴. These Constitutions read:

Nevertheless, in their conversations the coadjutor brothers ought to try to further the greater interior progress of their neighbors, to explain what they know, and to stimulate those whom they can to do good, since *our Lord has given care of his neighbor to everyone* [Si 17:12]. [cf. CSJ n. 115].

When [the Jesuit students] must go to schools open to the public [for they will not go to other places without requesting permission], they should go and return in pairs, and with the interior and exterior decorum which is proper for the edification of themselves and for others. Their conversation with students from outside the Society should be only about matters pertaining to learning, or spirituality, that thereby they may find help in everything toward greater divine glory. [cf. CSJ n. 349].

Likewise, [the Missionaries] will endeavor to be profitable to individuals by spiritual conversations, by counseling and exhorting to good works, and by conducting Spiritual exercises [CSJ n. 648].

To these members, Fr. Bertoni also adds **Novices**. With this addition, every level of the membership of the Congregation is included:

²⁴ cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1046 b, f.

‘Since God gave to everyone of them a commandment concerning his neighbor [Si 17:12], the Priests accomplish this by counsel and exhortation, but also the Students themselves, and the Novices, when this is permitted to them to do so, as well as the Coadjutor Brothers - each and every confrere in accord with his own ability, with the differing circumstances kept in mind which might occur in private conversations, is to strive wholeheartedly to encourage their neighbors to virtue.’

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CF # 281: This Constitution offers a classical caution regarding apostolates toward women. This might be best expressed by St. Ignatius as follows:

Likewise, because the members of this Society ought to be ready at any hour to go to some or other parts of the world where they may be sent by the Sovereign Pontiff or their own superiors, they ought not to take a curacy of souls, and still less ought they to take charge of religious women, or any other women whatever, to be their Confessor regularly or to direct them. However, nothing prohibits them in passing from hearing the confessions of a whole monastery for special reasons. [CSJ n. 588].

This would be the ‘apostolic’ reason, as is noted by St. Gaspar Bertoni in his **CF ## 4; 290**. The emphasis in this **# 281**, however, seems more as a caution defending chastity. Fr. Suarez has a rather lengthy section here in his Book IX, c. 8, nn. 15, 16²⁵, entitled: ‘An Explicit Moderation concerning Women comes to the fore’ here, in the context of what will be for Fr. Bertoni, **CF ## 288, 289**, concerning decency, and indecency in the apostolic endeavor. ‘The first discussion will be why the Society cannot take up the Care of Nuns - and this will be followed by n. 17²⁶: ‘And neither does the Society accept the care of secular Women’. N. 18 follows²⁷, entitled: Any ministry toward Women admitted into the Society demands certain circumstances: **Mature Age, Brief and Serious Conversation, An Open Place.’**

Fr. Bertoni summarizes this legislation as follows:

‘With regard to dealing with women, it is already noted above how, and at what time, and with prudence and circumspection this is to be done, is already noted above, which should be totally observed.’ [cf. above **CF ## 105; 108; 114; 290].**

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²⁵ cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1049 b, - 1050 b..

²⁶ o.c., pp 1050 b, f.

²⁷ o.c., p. 1051 a & b.

C. 4: Two Conditions by which this Means is accommodated to the Religious State [CF ## 282-290]

CF # 282: Here Fr. Bertoni follows Suarez²⁸ closely, but paraphrases considerably in order to adapt the text for his own purposes. Suarez' two-fold assertion was noted above: that such a ministry is in harmony with religious life in general; and secondly, in a particular manner is this to be exercised by the Society of Jesus. This second assertion [that this ministry is proper to the Company of Jesus], Suarez reasons, has two parts - and each will be presented in an individual manner as the two conditions for this to be a proper ministry for the Society.

Two points need to be considered here: one is, ***that this be assumed with the right intention, and only out of necessity and a pious purpose.*** These are the opening words of Fr. Bertoni's **CF # 282.** The second condition is that ***it be undertaken with great moderation and circumspection.*** And these are the opening words of Fr. Bertoni's **CF # 283.** Suarez reasons here that these two conditions only stand to reason: in every upright activity, these two conditions are necessary with applied proportion, for the rectitude of the enterprise. This particular matter - familiar conversation - in itself, is indifferent, but it can very readily lead to harm, unless great diligence is brought to bear concerning these two conditions to be observed. The doubts presented at the beginning of this discussion would also prove this assertion. The concern is found in all the Fathers that treat of it, as well as in all bodies of legislation. Only under this condition could this secular business be permitted, so that this ministry be furthered either as a work of charity, or of mercy. Otherwise, this worldly matter remains such, and of itself, it would not be permitted. Thus, Suarez adds here [and these words Fr. Bertoni has taken to continue his **CF # 282**]: ***...at vero amicitia vel conversatio cum saecularibus per se spectata pertinet...*** Fr. Bertoni then picks up Suarez' text at the bottom of this same column, where once again - as in **CF # 276**, the citation is from Basil, the shorter Rule, 311:

'The first condition is this: there must be the right intention of charity, or the cause of religion, i.e., on account of necessity, or some pious utility, because friendship, or conversation with seculars, of itself, pertains to secular enterprises, unless it is elevated by reason of its purpose, to a higher order.'

'Thus, St. Basil states [in the above-quote from his shorter Rule 311]: Moreover to go to visit someone, merely because of personal friendship or blood relationship, is alien to our profession.' Then he posits two motives, which among all the human reasons seem to be the most noble; and nevertheless, he demands still another that is even more sublime, that such an undertaking be indeed fitting for the religious state.'

²⁸ o.c., n. 7 - pp. 1046 b [bottom] - 1047, a, ff.

[Between the second and third paragraphs, Suarez adds these thoughts: It is not the same to say that a given activity is 'honest', or not evil morally speaking - and to say that such an activity is decent and proper to the religious state. For the former, there could suffice in the present matter that the motive of blood relationship, or human friendship that it be regulated by natural reason. However, for the second situation, a more sublime motive is necessary, because the religious state is ordered principally to the perfection of charity toward God. And therefore, for such actions to be fitting to the religious state, they should from their very purpose be tending toward this same end, or elevated by the intention of the doer of these activities to that end. And, therefore,....' - and here follows the next segment of **CF # 282**:

'Therefore, the Saint does not say that it is wrong to visit one's relatives or friends for this reason alone, but he does maintain that this is alien to the religious state.'

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CF # 283: Treats of one's own spiritual progress' - as above in **Part IV**. There is also the hint of the **ordered** nature of charity [cf. **CF ## 187-190; 208, ff.; 216; 220; 262; 283**].

For this Constitution, the opening phrase comes from the previous page of Suarez²⁹: **...Alius est, ut magna moderatione et circumspectione fiat**. Fr. Bertoni then adds these words: **Modus autem seu mensura sumenda est ex fine iam dicto, a quo...** The next words: **...duo spectanda sunt:** down to **...ad bonum proximorum** are from Suarez³⁰. The next few words are Fr. Bertoni's own: **...nisi enim fructus speratur proximorum, otiosa est omnis conversatio:** there is something like this at the bottom of this same page in Suarez: **ergo in presenti si non speretur fructus proximorum, otiosa est omnis cum illo confabulatio...** [From St. Augustine]. Then follows the quote from St. Bernard [cf. Ep 8], concluding with a phrase from **Si 30:24**: [**...Indulge animae tuae et consolare cor tuum, et tristitiam longe repelle a te...**] which Fr. Bertoni copies from Suarez.

The third paragraph paraphrases Suarez' words in the middle of the column on the same page: **... quia ordine charitatis praefendus est Deus proximo, et proprius profectus spiritualis alieno...** Fr. Bertoni's final wording is as follows:

'The second condition is the following: That such familiar conversation be conducted with great moderation and circumspection. Moreover, this manner, or measure is to be gauged from the above-mentioned end, in which two matters must be considered: One is pertaining to God, or, what amounts to the same, to one's own progress in the love of God. The other aspect pertains to the good of our neighbors; for if there is

²⁹ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1047 a - top.

³⁰ l.c., p. 1047, a.

no benefit hoped in behalf of our neighbors, this conversation is without purpose.'

'Moreover, St. Bernard [Ep. 8] states; Right order requires that one should take care of his own conscience first, then that of others. Indeed, this is the first degree of piety, about which it is written: ...Have pity on your own soul, pleasing God [Si 30:24].'

'From this first step by the right path ordered charity proceeds to caring for one's neighbor, for indeed each one is commanded to leave each in his own measure.'

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CF # 284: And again, the central concern of one's spiritual progress. This next Constitution follows more carefully the Suarez text here ³¹: Fr. Bertoni copies the text almost *verbatim*:

'Therefore, in the first place, this conversation should not be excessive, for this would indeed impede one's own spiritual progress. It will be excessive according to the teachings of **St. Thomas [II-II, q. 187, a. 2]**:

First, if it is done outside the obedience to the Superior;

Secondly, if it impedes one's spiritual exercises and duties of divine worship, which the religious is bound to fulfill according to his rule.

Thirdly, If these conversations so occupy and distract one's religious soul that in some way they render him worldly.'

'However, he who is faithful to the religious state in the first two points, and maintains the right intention toward God, can expect divine assistance, so that in the third point he might not be defective, but would observe the proper means. Moreover, this is an excellent counsel that in our Congregation it is most necessary, to let the superior know in so far as is possible, one's own weakness and condition in this, so that perhaps he might not assign someone to such matters in which he would be involved, or burden someone with so many activities toward our neighbors, that he would not be able to sustain these without harm to his own spiritual life.

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CF # 285: Here Suarez cites Cajetan, on this same article of St. Thomas: **II-II, q. 187, a. 2**. The discussion continues that all indecent occupation with our neighbors should be avoided. Suarez teaches that it pertains to the same moderation, that any action undertaken in behalf of one's neighbor, should be 'decent', and fitting to the religious state, which is what Cajetan has noted here:

'It pertains to this same moderation, Cajetan teaches [commenting on II-II, q. 187, a. 2] that any enterprise, undertaken in behalf of our

³¹ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1048 a-b.

neighbor should be decent and fitting to the religious state, because the good of religion is to be preferred to one's particular good, and for this reason the religious should not act as a merchant, draw up wills, or execute them, or conduct public affairs, or be implicated in like business, that he might come to his neighbor's aid, even if there is some hope that from this, spiritual fruit could result.

In his CSJ n. 591, St. Ignatius is quite clear about these matters:

That the Society may be able to devote itself more entirely to the spiritual pursuits pertaining to its profession, it should abstain as far as possible from all secular employments, such as being executors of testaments, or of mandates, or of being procurators of civil affairs, or of any such business, though not accepting such burdens and not employing itself in them because of any requests. If such business affairs occur in connection with the colleges, they should have a procurator to take care of them and defend their rights. If such affairs arise in connection with the houses of the Society, or its whole body, to enable the Society itself to preserve its peace, the same procurator, or another coadjutor, or some person from outside the Society, or some family which undertakes the protection of the house could defend the Society's rights for greater glory to God.

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CF # 286: As Suarez' text continues [n. 12]³², he brings up an unusual point which then impressed Fr. Bertoni here: it is noted that sometimes throughout history holy men would go to extremes to win their neighbors over to spiritual realities. And Suarez quotes Theodoretus, in his History of the Holy Fathers of the Church [c. 17], recalls Abram the Monk, and later a Bishop. It is related that he approached a man lost in the darkness of impiety, took on the role of a **merchant** to win him over. It is made clear that it is one thing to exercise the life of a merchant in order for temporal gain, through which one's neighbors would be approached, but this is something totally different. Suarez quotes the example of **Blessed Francis Xavier** doing this in his **Apostolic Mission**.

As Suarez' text continues here, what follows provides the basis for Fr. Bertoni's Constitution here: '**However, it is totally different to don the habit of a merchant,**

³² cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1048 b.

or to play that role, for the preaching of the faith³³, or some other like work of piety, as some saints have done'³⁴. Suarez comments here on the example of Francis Xavier: He manifested himself not only as a merchant, but as pertaining to the group of non-believing merchants, undertaking enormous effort and deference, so that he might enter China. The *eodem modo* i.e., following the example of the Jesuit Missionary, that follows is once more taken up by Fr. Bertoni *verbatim*:

*'In the same manner it is licit sometimes to go among the heretics dressed as a soldier, or as some other secular, or to pretend to be involved in a business deal, on account of the same purpose of conversing with Catholics in hiding, for conserving, or increasing the faith among them. Missionaries*³⁵ *do this on occasion, for this is not lying, nor is it something that is unbecoming the religious state, but is merely concealing what is true, since it is clear for what purpose and out of what necessity this is done.'*

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CF # 287: Here Fr. Bertoni follows only schematically what the ancient monks, and even St. Paul himself did in order to win souls for Christ, as presented by Suarez³⁶ - he exercised works of art for financial support for their Apostolic Mission. Suarez specifically quotes Cajetan, in his commentary on **II-II, q. 187, a. 2**, already noted above under **CF # 284**. Suarez also notes St. Gregory here and his example of the work as a fisherman.

'It is not a worldly business to produce works of some art, which once the Monks did, as well as St. Paul himself, that they might support themselves, or their neighbors, by the price obtained for their efforts. This is of itself indifferent and common.

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CF # 288: in the Suarez text, the important thought of **St. Thomas, II-II, q. 187, a. 2**, is still noted. This particular Constitution is simply n. 13, in Suarez' c. 8 of Book 9³⁷. The title here is: 'By what rules may the above-mentioned 'indecent' be

³³ **NB:** It should be noted here that Fr. Stofella inadvertently left out the Latin words: *ad praedicandum fidem* - but the idea is included in the Italian translation

³⁴ **NB:** it should be noted here that Fr. Suarez'; text is slightly different: *...quod fecit ille sanctus, et non minori admiratone, B. Franciscus Xavier*. There is no specific Jesuit habit: cf. CSJ nn. 18;19;81;101;102;197;292;297; 577-579. For Fr. Bertoni: CF ## 6;32;43;91;133;137;

³⁵ **NB:** Suarez' text has here: *...quod nostri alicubi faciunt* - and Fr. Bertoni translates *nostri* as *Missionarii passim faciunt...*

³⁶ l.c., p. 1049 b.

³⁷ cf. p. 1049 a - b.

recognized.’ And Suarez explains: that if you should seek to know when an action of this type is to be considered as unfitting for the religious state, even if it might be beneficial to our neighbor, there are two principles by which this could be discerned. And this is the setting now for Fr. Bertoni’s Constitution:

‘There are two principles by which there can be ascertained the decency of such familiar conversations or the lack of decency for the whole matter.

‘The first principle would be if this activity was already prohibited, either because of itself it is evil, or because it is prohibited to clerics by common law, and religious are comparable to them in this matter³⁸; or, if it is forbidden by one’s own Institute and special law.

‘Another principle is whether this endeavor is of such a nature that it could hardly be undertaken without danger of sin, as St. Gregory has said [Hom. 24, in Evangelia]. This same principle holds with due proportion if the undertaking would excessively occupy the spirit with the care and solicitude of temporal matters.

‘However, since there can be such latitude in this matter, therefore, having put aside any legislation in this regard, obedience to the Superior, no certain rule can be prescribed. There has to be employed here prudent judgment, and the custom of the observant and respectful religious is to be observed, as well as the common sense of those rightly considering and judging what this whole enterprise is, and that it is not in their view alien to the religious state.’

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CF # 289: this next Constitution is paraphrased somewhat from Suarez’ n. 14³⁹ - where the Jesuit theologian quotes from what is called “Rule 44 of the Common Rules”⁴⁰. Fr. Bertoni paraphrases somewhat:

‘Therefore, none of our members will ever accept, or promise, any undertaking, even one that is pious, without the permission of the Superior.’

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CF # 290: here is another special injunction regarding women; in general [cf. **CF ## 105; 108; 114; 290**] - and specifically, the perpetual care of religious women [cf. **CF ## 4; 290**]. For Fr. Suarez, his **nn. 15 & 16** here⁴¹, refer back to his **Book I**⁴², but

³⁸ NB: here once again, Suarez quotes II-II, q. 187, a. 2.

³⁹ Cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1049 b.

⁴⁰ Suarez’ text here is as follows: *...ut negotium etiam pium sine facultate Superioris nec suscipiatur, nec promittatur: saecularia autem negotia omnino vitentur.*

⁴¹ Cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1049 b, bottom, ff.

⁴² cf. Suarez, Book I, Chapter 3; n. 13 - pp. 574, b, f.

are explained here. This moderation explained here is especially regarding women. And firstly, the Society does not assume the care of nuns.' This is spelled out by St. Ignatius in the VIth Part of his Constitutions:

Likewise, because the members of this Society ought to be ready at any hour to go to some other parts of the world where they may be sent by the sovereign pontiff, or their own superiors, they ought not to take a curacy of souls, and still less ought they to take charge of religious women, or any other women whatever to be their confessors regularly or to direct them. However, nothing prohibits them in passing from hearing the confessions of a whole monastery for special reasons [CSJ n. 588].

The basic reason is given by Suarez on his next page: even though the spiritual care of souls is ordained to their spiritual salvation, this is nonetheless not accommodated to the end and the institution of the Society of Jesus. For not all cares, or solicitude which are ordered toward even the spiritual care of their neighbors are fitting for the Society of Jesus - both because of the sheer number of ministries [for not all of these can be satisfied by any one community]; and then also there are those ministries which bear with them certain obligations, and bonds which are repugnant to the central intention of the Society of Jesus. And principal among these is the perpetual care of souls which would excessively impede the workers of the Society, as it is necessary for them to be of the number of the more faithful and the more suited to going throughout the whole world, and they are ordained for this purpose.

Suarez adds a further reason here [n. 16]⁴³: the monasteries of such contemplative nuns ought to be directed by those religious under whose rules they live, and the general institute of which they observe. Thus, the Nuns of St. Clare would not easily be directed by the Order of Preachers, and so on. According to the institute of the Society, it is proper to men, so that it cannot accommodate women. The reason is that the Company is not only ordered to contemplating, nor is it principally and of itself ordered toward austerity of life, nor to praying the Psalms together, nor to manual labor - nor lastly, to any of those ends which may be common to both men and women. The Society of Jesus is instituted for spiritual ministries, such as those which by women cannot, and should not be done - and for this purpose, Jesuits have a purpose and a rule accommodated to this lifestyle. As a result, they cannot easily set up monasteries of women, which would live under the rules of the Society, but it is required that Jesuits have a greatly different lifestyle. So, rightly the Society needs to abstain from the government and the care of women.

As for women in general, Suarez' title for n. 17⁴⁴ reads: 'And indeed neither does the Society accept the care of secular women. Why this is so.' Suarez responds

⁴³ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1050 a.

⁴⁴ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1050 b, f.

why there should not be any mutual bond between a Jesuit and any woman. A religious of the Society of Jesus, by his own institute, may never be constituted as the proper priest of any women, even though they are not connected to any religious family, because they have a totally other life-style. The Jesuit would be obliged out of justice to minister the sacraments to them. The ancient Jesuit prescriptions for priests [n. 19] reads: 'That no one shall assume the care of particular persons, especially women, and even though in his role as confessor, the Jesuit may impose a penance in the life of a woman, **he will not agree to accept the obedience of any person.**'⁴⁵ This rule pertains not only to women - and Suarez quotes on the next page how this is also an old Franciscan rule.

Suarez' n. 18⁴⁶ has as its title: 'Even when ministry toward women is admitted in the Society of Jesus, it demands certain circumstances: Mature age. Brief and serious discourse. In a conspicuous place.' This seems to have been summarized by Fr. Bertoni in **CF # 281**: prudence, circumspection, and a careful selection of ministers. Fr. Bertoni's summary of all this reads now as his **CF # 290**:

'Moreover, since it has been stated from the beginning that our Congregation does not admit the ordinary care of souls, this is to be understood not only with regard for the community of secular men, and especially for monasteries and congregations of religious women. But, this further implies that no confrere will accept there will assume this ordinary care of certain men, or especially of women, almost out of a mutual duty and obligation of one toward the other, nor is there to be admitted the obedience of any person.'

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c. 5: The Manner of visiting and assisting our Neighbors in their Danger of Death [CF ## 291-297].

CF # 291: This is studied by Suarez in his Book IX, Chapter IX, which has as its title: 'Whether the Society should offer a Particular Care in assisting its Neighbors in the Danger of Death'⁴⁷, and is made up of 11 numbers. There is also included here a reflection on the Wills of the Dying. This is reflected upon by St. Ignatius in CSJ nn. 412, ff. :

Just as one's fellowmen are helped to live well by what has been stated above, so an effort should be made to know what helps them die

⁴⁵ **NB:** These words are explicitly cited by Fr. Bertoni as his conclusion to CF # 290: *...neque ullius [personae] obedientiam admittat.*

⁴⁶ This next number provides the qualities needed in the priest who would conduct this ministry among women. And this is found in Fr. Bertoni's CF # 281. [cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1051 a & b, top].

⁴⁷ cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1051 b - 1056 b.

well, and what procedures should be used at a moment so important for gaining, or losing the ultimate end, eternal happiness. [CSJ n. 412]⁴⁸.

It is good to have a compendium on the method of helping someone to die well, to refresh the memory when this holy ministry must be exercised [CSJ n. 413].

This all falls under the umbrella of the Apostolic Mission described in Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions:

The members will occupy themselves in corporal works of mercy to the extent that the more important spiritual activities permit and their own energies allow. For example, they can help the sick, especially those in hospitals, by visiting them, and by sending others to serve them... [cf. CSJ n. 650].

Fr. Bertoni's first sentence in **CF # 291** is a combination of CSJ 412 quoted *verbatim* by Suarez, and the second sentence is from Rule 40 for the Prepositus⁴⁹ :

'Let care be taken so that the confreres might be experienced in conferring on their neighbors all that is required for dying well, and that they might know perfectly well which manner is to be observed in that moment of time upon which eternity depends. There should not be lacking those who will hear the confessions of the sick laity and who can assist the dying.'

Suarez concludes that this is one of the ministries that is supremely proper to the Society, and it is one to which from their own Rule the Community is held, in that obligation by which the Company is obliged to the rest of the works of the Institute.

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CF # 292: Suarez continues here in n. 2⁵⁰, entitled: 'This Ministry is in harmony with the religious state.' The fact that this work is fitting to the religious state is sufficiently proven, because it is most fitting to charity, and contains nothing contrary to the above-mentioned state, if in it the proper manner be served. And it is confirmed, for the Sacred Councils greatly commends to pastors this ministry, as one might note in the Council of Nantes, c. 4, which from this source I will quote literally, because it excellently describes the manner to be observed in this task: *Whenever a priest* [it

⁴⁸ **NB:** Fr. Bertoni quotes this Constitution directly to some extent: *...ita curandum est ut ea qua ad bene moriendum illis conferunt percipiantur; quique modus in eo tempore, in quo tantum est momenti ad finem ultimum aeternae felicitatis consequendum...*

⁴⁹ cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 1051 b- 1052 a.

⁵⁰ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1052 a.

says] *should hear that someone is ill in his town...* - the rest of this quote forms the second part of this Constitution, following Fr. Bertoni's introduction:

'Whenever someone of our confreres has been called to some sick person, whether poor or rich, no matter from what illness the person may be suffering, and at any hour of the day or night, *he should go to this person with all speed, and on entering into the sick-room, he will sprinkle holy water upon the ailing person, and throughout the entire room, praying the antiphon, 'Sprinkle me, o Lord', with the antiphon [Council of Nantes, c. 4]*⁵¹.

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CF # 293: For this Constitution, the Suarez citation of the Council of Nantes continues, c. 4, word for word - and Fr. Bertoni copies it here, a brief lesson in pastoral theology. This is all taken from the *Compendium* which St. Ignatius' secretary, Fr. Polanco, drew up:

'After this, he will direct all to leave the room, and approaching the bed, on which the sick person is lying, he will address him kindly and gently, so that he might place all his hope in God, that he might patiently put up with this affliction, that he might believe that this comes to him for his purification and correction. This is so that the sick person might confess his sins, that he promise amendment, should the Lord spare his life, that he do penance for his committed sins. The priest will advise him that he might make some disposition for his goods while he is still conscious and enjoying the use of reason, that he might redeem his sins by giving alms, that he might pay back those against whom he might have sinned. He will encourage the person to maintain the correct faith and its tenets, that he never despair of the mercy of God.

'When the mind of the infirm individual has been encouraged with these, and similar exhortations, once he has given the blessing, the priest will withdraw. After a short while, the priest will return, in order to give time so that the sick person might reflect upon his sins.'

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CF # 294: There was always some danger for this ministry - that priests would strive to get the sick person to include him, or his religious community in the will. Suarez includes a section here entitled: 'A Two-fold Calumny is rejected, by which the Society on account of this Ministry might be attacked by those badly disposed to her.' Then follows n. 3: 'The first of these two which is objected against our men - The Objection which is directed against us'. Suarez goes on⁵²: For indeed there is no enterprise of such charity which, either by calumny, or by some negligence, could be reprehended. In two manners, therefore, the Society presents its position regarding

⁵¹ ib. The first line here is taken from the next column presented by Suarez, p. 1052 b, near the top of the page - following a quote from St. Augustine.

⁵² Cf. o.c., p. 1052 b, second half.

this ministry. One pertains to the solicitude for those who are dying of some suffering; the other concerns those who are suffering a violent death as capital punishment. Concerning the former ministry, avarice is reprehended, because the priests of the Society desire to assist the dying, so that they might participate in their worldly goods, by inducing the dying so that they might dispose of these goods in their will, or in some other way. However, this is quite contrary to the spirit and intention of the Society. While there is some room allowed for private errors, or defects in this matter, and which perhaps, either from wayward human affection, or from zeal not based on good knowledge, might be committed. Any such intention is detested by the Society which prohibits any such activity. Therefore, in the last of its rules, ***the priests who are called....*** - and these are the opening lines of Fr. Bertoni's **CF # 294**, which now follows *verbatim*⁵³:

'The priests who are called to assist those who are close to death, shall remain with them only as long as their need would require. And although, whenever this might be necessary, it would be fitting to exhort these seriously ill persons⁵⁴ that they should make their wills, but they will not assist them in doing so.'

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CF # 295: the great delicacy of the Jesuits in this matter is shown is Suarez' further lengthy commentary here. The next Constitution is taken from the Jesuit theologian's n. 4 here: 'Our members are not permitted to give any further counsel concerning their dispositions of their worldly goods to those who are dying. What and when counsel is requested.' This text⁵⁵ provides Fr. Bertoni's text here, *verbatim*:

'For the same reason, whenever it might be necessary, the sick person is to be admonished to dispose of his worldly goods because of his danger. However, he should not be counseled concerning the manner of his disposition of these goods, except in those matters that might be necessary for his salvation, as making restitution of others' goods, the payment of his debts, appointing the necessary heirs so that, as far as it lies within him, every occasion of strife and law-suits might be removed. However, it is not proper to descend to particulars, as this would lead to the same inconveniences.'

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CF # 296: this Constitution continues *verbatim* the same Suarez text:

'If, however, the sick person should seek counsel concerning those matters about which he can freely dispose, it does pertain to the office of

⁵³ Cf. o.c., pp. 1052 b- 1053 a.

⁵⁴ Here Suarez uses the word *aegrotos*.

⁵⁵ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1053 b - the second half of the column.

Confessor to suggest that which he judges would be of the greater service⁵⁶ of God and to the greater help of the soul of the testator. In order that our confreres accomplish this in the proper manner, they should observe the following...'

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CF # 297: In Suarez' text here, he quotes CSJ n. 564, and Fr. Bertoni uses these words of from St. Ignatius: **... ad eleemosinas perpetuas domibus, vel Ecclesiis eiusdem Sodalitatis [Societatis] relinquendas incitare...** That Constitution reads:

Although it is praiseworthy to induce others to do good and holy works, especially those which endure perpetually, nevertheless, with a view to greater edification, no one of the Society ought to, or may induce any person to establish perpetual alms for the houses or churches of the Society itself....[CSJ n. 564].

The second half of Fr. Bertoni's **CF # 297** is found on the next page of Suarez⁵⁷, quoting Clementina 1 *De Privilegiis* :

'No one of our confreres ought to, or may induce any person to establish perpetual alms for the houses or churches of the Congregation itself⁵⁸. Nor likewise shall any confrere bring it about that legacies, or debts, or ill-gotten or doubtful goods be left to his Congregation [Clem. 1, De Priv.]

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⁵⁶ **NB:** the word here is *obsequium*.

⁵⁷ Cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 1054 a.

⁵⁸ **NB:** this translation is from George E. Ganss, SJ. *St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary.* St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970, p. 256.