

St. Gaspar Bertoni



Parte VIII

[CF ## 152 - 157]

of his

Original Constitutions

A Study by

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November, 2003

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EIGHTH PART

THE PROMOTION OF STUDENTS

[cc. 1-2,## 152-157]

Premise:

[1] Fr. Bertoni's *Original Constitutions* speak of an **Admission** into the **Novitiate** - this is the **Second Part [CF ## 27-39]**. This is followed by "Another Probation", the **Second Period** of Formation, that time **after Novitiate [Third Part, CF ## 40-46]**. The **Fourth Part**, it will be remembered, speaks of **Spiritual [CF ## 47-48]** and **Intellectual Progress [CF ## 49-68]**. Now here in the **Eighth Part**, the Stigmatine Founder - just before treating of the occupations of the "Professed", i.e., the **Apostolic Missionaries** properly so called, speaks of still another year of probation, following the completion of studies, a "Second Novitiate" (?) [cf. **CF # 152**], the **Schola Affectus**.

[2] There may seem to be a minor discrepancy when one considers his plan of **at least "six years of theology"** [cf. **CF # 40**], **two or three years of private study** of the Fathers and the more important studies, after the completion of the four years of theology. He has also legislated that students will attend classes until their 25th year [cf. **CF # 70**], and then may receive Minor Orders. Until their 30th year, then, they will specialize - for five full years - on **those studies which are cultivated among us, and for which they may manifest a special aptitude**. It is only during this time that they will be initiated into Sacred Orders and the Priesthood [cf. **CF # 71**].

[3] **The titles of these Parts are interesting:**

- **Fifth Part, cc. 1-3, ## 69-82: *De Alumnorum Sodalitatis Promotione*;**
- **Eighth Part, cc. 1-2, ## 152-157: *De Studentium Promotione*.**

[4] It should also be noted that from the earliest practice of the promotion of confreres to the Grade of "**Apostolic Missionary**" - some years of exercise in the **graviora ministeria** of the Congregation was one of the requirements¹. For St.

¹ cf. Xth General Chapter on Legislation for the "Apostolic Missionary" Sept. 1889, p. 309 [of the English translation]:... At length, after a Priest Member has spent some years in the ecclesiastical ministries, he could be elevated to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary. But, no one is to be endowed with this Grade, unless he has completed his 35th year, and ten years of vows in our Sodality.

Moreover, there is required in him besides outstanding piety, love for regular discipline, and zeal for the salvation of souls, that he be endowed with suitable doctrine, i.e., that he has passed with praise his last exam, after having completed the entire curriculum of theology; also that he be of great merit to the Institute, either because he was engaged in giving the Sacred Missions, or the Spiritual Exercises, or for a full three years, he had been Director of some

Ignatius this “Third Probation” seems to have been required prior to Holy Orders - and from the title of this Eighth Part, this seems to have been Fr. Bertoni’s intention.

[5] The “Third Probation”: the *Schola Affectus*, the “School of the Heart” [n. 516]: the Ignatian Program of Formation added two elements to the “traditional”, monastic program, in vogue until his time. He added the six **experiences, experiments** [these can be repeated throughout the entire time of formation: cf. n. 71] - and this “**Third Year**” of Probation, added on after finishing their studies, and before taking the vows as a “Formed Coadjutor” [cf. nn. 16; 71; 119; 514]. Ignatius desired that future members might benefit from their experiences of formation, that all might proceed further in the Lord [n. 81]. The first companions, right after ordination, spent three months in prayer and some apostolate.

- a. This structure has several names: “**Third Formation**” and the “**School of the Affections**”. This third year is considered a time of genuine formation: after the two complete years of probation, the scholastics will have an additional year [CSJ n. 16] - in addition to the two years of probation, when their studies are completed, they are required to take another year in order to become an “approved” scholastic [nn. 71, 119; 514].
- b. This new period of probation after studies is meant to be a further test, or “trial”. The integration of members into the Institute is always differentiated, **gradated**, in a double incorporation: in the first one, the candidate becomes only partly a member of the body; through the second incorporation, there is a more intimate “entering” among the “formed” members, and may be even chosen to be one of the “Professed” – Fr. Bertoni once thought that this would happen only at, or about age 50! ²
- c. The two years of probation as Novices prepare one for “**provisional incorporation**” - and the one more year added on after the Scholastics’ studies are over is required for the “**definitive incorporation**” [n. 516]. The Latin term, *the School of the Heart* seems to be from Gerson, who used the term in opposition to the parallel term: the *School of the Understanding*. So, this “School” is interpreted to pertain to the **will**. This is the **School of Virtue**.

house of ours, or had been a teacher in the sacred disciplines for four years, or was dedicated for many years in instructing the youth, or lastly, he had performed well some other office, or duty for the good of the Sodality. The judgment of this merit is absolutely up to the Superior and the General Councilors, who, by a plurality of secret votes, will promote those to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary, who are endowed with these qualities we have noted above: they will announce, by decree, their promotion to the entire Sodality.

² Cf. MssB # 9867 – cf. Facciotti text, pp. 86 & 87.

- d. The virtues that are noted here are *greater humility, abnegation of all sensual love and will and judgment of their own, and also greater knowledge and love of God our Lord* [cf. n. 516]. The **Profectus suiipsius** [cf. CF ## 47-48], and the **Profectus in ecclesiasticis doctrinis** [CF ## 49-48] are **a life-long endeavor also for Fr. Bertonì.**
- e. The principal means for developing these virtues is cooperating with grace in the exercise of them - in spiritual and corporal pursuits, practices of prayer and devotion, humility, mortification. This Third Probation must be spent in passing through the various aspects of formation and trials, and especially through the six ***experiences, experiments***, of the Novitiate, even if they had had them before.
- f. The reason for this “schooling” of the affections, or will is that the members should make **progress** - both spiritual and intellectual - and thus be better equipped to assist others in making progress for the glory of God. In order to help others, it is most necessary that one first be “spiritual”. This means knowing and loving spiritual things and doing works in conformity with this love - hence, it follows contempt for temporal things and the abnegation of the old man.

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[A] Ignatian Influence

1. **CSJ n. 516:** The ‘Third Probation’ is noted primarily in Ignatius’ here, the first Constitution of his Chapter Two [“The Qualities of those to be admitted”] in his Part V, Admission, or Incorporation into the Society”. The text reads:

1. Since no one should be admitted into any of the aforementioned categories unless he has been judged fit in our Lord, for admission to Profession those persons will be judged worthy whose life is well-known through long and thorough probations and is approved by the Superior General, to whom a report will be sent by other superiors or others from whom the General desires information³.

For this purpose after those who were sent to studies have achieved the diligent and careful formation of the intellect by learning, they will find it helpful during the period of the last probation to apply themselves to the School of the Heart, by exercising themselves in spiritual and corporal pursuits which can engender in them greater humility, abnegation of all sensual love and will and

³ This segment refers to other Jesuit Constitutions, nn.12, 308, 657. 819.

judgment of their own, and also greater knowledge and love of God, our Lord⁴; that when they themselves have made progress they can better help others to progress for the glory to God our Lord...

- a. In nn. 514-516, Ignatius clearly envisages two periods of training: in the first, the emphasis is on the intellectual - and on the affective, or spiritual formation in the second. These emphases are overlapping rather than mutually exclusive [cf. nn. 400, 481].
 - b. Ignatius' idea of the "**Third Probation**" is one that was distilled from his earlier spiritual experiences. The young Jesuit was considered as one still proving himself worthy and also preparing himself for a life spent in bringing glory to God through lowly but effective apostolic works, such as preaching, serving in hospitals. These endeavors demanded long and continuing self-abnegation and humility as the indispensable means. So many used the clerical state as a stepping stone to the easy life.
 - c. In his time, many of the studies were directed excessively to the intellect alone, and were often very dry! The saint found himself spiritually dry during his own years of study. When these had been completed, he committed himself to lowly, but effective spiritual ministrations and prayer, and these **armed** his affections, and he experienced anew his earlier consolations. Involvement with people brought the Saint and his companions to a more vivid perception of their own need of prayer and union with God.
 - d. **Thus the "Third Probation" had two purposes:**
 - that of testing through which the young priest would prove his willingness to the Society's hard and humble work to bring men and women to God;
 - and secondly, the training of the heart through the exercise of virtues, such as zeal, willing service, humility and love of God and neighbor.
 - e. After Ignatius' death, the structure of the *Tertianship* gradually changed - it was eventually made as a Novitiate, in a separate house. The training of the heart was sought largely by seclusion, prayer, spiritual reading and lectures.
2. His Fifth Part is divided into four chapters:
- **the different manners of admission- the authority needed to admit candidates [c. 1];**

⁴ This segment refers to other Jesuit Constitutions, nn. 16, 71, 119, 514.

- **the qualities of the candidates indicated for the various grades [c. 2];**
 - **the juridical and liturgical acts that establish the solemn profession [cc. 3 & 4].**
- a. There were required at least seven years of Jesuit life before the profession of the three solemn vows.
- b. The additional year of probation was indeed a novelty in religious life. It arose around the year 1541 when the “experiences” [cf. nn. 64, ff.] of the first year of probation would be required of those who had “sufficient” learning - yet, needed further formation of the “heart”. It is a time for those spiritual and corporal exercises which contribute the more to deepen one in humility and abnegation.
- c. The Constitutions say only that this Third Year must be held for those whose studies are completed, for those to be admitted as spiritual coadjutors.

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**[B] St. Gaspar Bertoni
[cc. 1 & 2, ## 152-157]**

The Stigmatine Founder divided his Eighth Part into two chapters:

- **the fact of this Third Probation [## 152-154];**
- **its nature [## 155-157].**

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**c. 1: The remaining Formation upon the Completion of One’s Studies
[CF ## 152-154]**

CF # 152: the concern that one’s piety might wane through tepidity, or that one’s fervor would cool off, runs through Fr. Bertoni’s Constitutions:

- **# 42:** a further application to the “experiments” so that the candidates’ piety, humility, prudence, remain “conspicuous”;
- **# 66:** always balance: the fervor for studies should not weaken piety - nor excessive piety weaken study;

- **# 127:** learning is not to be preferred to the spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation, and the required reading and examen;
- **# 152:** the Third Probation is meant also to re-ignite piety;
- **# 253:** excessive hospitality, vacation, should not lead one to laxitude, or tepidity of spirit.

[This sense of balance can be noted from the Stigmatine Founder's own **Spiritual Diary**: those who are excessively inclined to action, should return to prayer; and those who are attached to prayer, must be encouraged to activity ⁵]. [In the understanding of this **CF 152**, it would be helpful to return to **# 38**, where Fr. Bertoni suggests the continuance of the "**Experiments**" for the young priests]:

When their studies have been completed, in case any of their fervor for virtue should have weakened through their dedication to letters, the students will be proven by still another year of probation so that they might rekindle it both in exercises of devotion and humility, as well as in being applied to the ministries of the Community.

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CF # 153: [a very practical matter]: This formation should be held either in the same place of the Novices, on account of the small number, or in a separate house, withdrawn from the usual contact with friends and relatives, either by visits, or by letters.

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CF # 154: If their number should warrant, they will come together in the same house, under one Instructor, who will be suited for this by his authority and also experience.

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c. 2: On the Nature of this Probation **[CF ## 155-157]**

[This is a matter not treated perhaps in this detail in the Jesuit Constitutions].

CF # 155: The Instructor will take every care to form all of the candidates spiritually, and will explain to them **the universal nature of our Institute** on a few assigned days of each week, as he will make known to them **the means of assisting**

⁵ MP - July 12, 1808.

their neighbors in working out their salvation. [cf. **CF # 33**, a similar element of formation for the Novices]

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CF # 156: [The imposition of penances and mortifications comes up at various intervals in the *Original Constitutions* of Fr. Bertoni [**# 43: no common rule** for them; **# 44**, penances which the Confessor, or the Superior will impose; **# 48:** under the progress in one's perfection, abnegation is noted; **# 112:** each one will practice some, in accord with the Superior or Confessor].

The Instructor might also impose penances and mortifications privately among the candidates, which he will judge might lead to their perfection. Whatever pertains to external discipline, however, he will only decide after having consulted with the Superior of the house, of which a certain part of it might have been indicated for their dwelling.

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CF # 157: Should anyone prove to be less than satisfactory in this probation, he should be sent away, and this probation put off to another time.
[This now leads to the heart of the Original Constitutions, Part IX, concerning the *Professed Apostolic Missionaries*].

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