

Reminiscences

concerning

The Fathers and the Brothers

of the

**Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries
for the Assistance of Bishops**

Volume I

Venerable Gaspar Bertoni

[† June 12, 1853]

**And Necrologies of the Members of the
Early Stigmatine Community
[1835 -1859]**

VERONA

Prem. Tipografia Vescovile P. Colombari

1886

TABLE of CONTENTS

Dedication

Preface

Brief Remarks on the Congregation [1816-1886]

†

Part One: Reminiscences of the Life of Venerable Gaspar Bertoni

Chapter 1:	His Boyhood
Chapter 2:	Early Years
Chapter 3:	As a Young Man
Chapter 4:	As A Seminarian
Chapter 5:	As a Priest
Chapter 6:	As a Missionary of Youth
Chapter 7:	As a Missionary to the People, Clergy and Sisters
Chapter 8:	At the Stimmate
Chapter 9:	As a Teacher and Educator
Chapter 10:	Fr. Gaspar and his Seminarians
Chapter 11:	As Definitor and Pro-Synodal Examiner
Chapter 12:	His Eminent Virtues
Chapter 13:	Indications of his Virtues
Chapter 14:	His Last Years
Chapter 15:	His Last Illness
Chapter 16:	His Holy Death
Chapter 17:	Last Tribute, a Concept of his Holiness

†††

Part Two: Necrologies ***Compendia* of the Lives of the Members of the Early Stigmatine Community**

Brother Angelo Casella	+ April 3, 1835
Fr. Louis Biadego	+ February 12, 1842
Louis Ferrari, Cleric	+ March 6, 1842
Fr. Modesto Cainer	+ January 12, 1844
Fr. Francis Cartolari	+ July 3, 1846
Fr. Michael Angelo Gramego	+ July 31, 1853
Brother John Baptist Bandoria	+ September 6, 1853
Felice Fortunato Marini, Student	+ October 18, 1858
Fr. Cajetan Brugnoli	+ November 18, 1858
Louis Salvi, Novice Student	+ October 1, 1859
Francis Madinelli, Professed Cleric	+ October 26, 1859

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Dedication

To the
Very Reverend Peter Vignola, Superior General
on the
Occasion of his Golden Priestly Jubilee,
September 24, 1886

Very Reverend Father,

The friendship of many years, with which you honor me, that kind of kinship that unites us, and above all that great benefit that I alone know and profess to have received from you, for a long time now, have made me feel the need of paying tribute to you, with a public attestation of sincere affection.

It is because I have agreed wholeheartedly with the thought of presenting to you, on the most happy occurrence of your Priestly Jubilee, these brief *Reminiscences* of those Father and Brothers of the Congregation, over which you preside with such wisdom. These men have already returned to the bosom of God, to reap the reward of their virtues. These *Reminiscences* were given to me by some of your sons. To them, it seemed only just that these early products might extend their influence even beyond that cloister where they lived. In this way, there would be enhanced the cherished hope that the example of these men, whom the Congregation was called upon to bring to spiritual maturity, might have an even greater effect.

Accept, then, Very Reverend Father, these precious *Reminiscences*, as a sign of my gratitude, and of the ardent best wishes, that on this happy day, I offer up to the Lord for you, and for all of your beloved sons, in whose jubilation, with all my heart, I consider myself fortunate to be associated.

So, then, Very Reverend Father, if I might hope – and I do hope - that I may not be forgotten in your prayers before the Lord on this day. I would thus believe that I would then be compensated, with interest, for the little that I have been able to do on so happy an occasion.

Permit me, lastly, with all respect, to kiss your hand – in this act, I profess that I am filled with a holy joy!

Verona, September 24, 1886

Your most devoted and affectionate servant,
Fr. Ferdinand Colombari

Preface

If the death of the just is precious before the Lord – *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints...* [Ps 115:15] – then, so, too, are their virtuous acts. It is from these that their lives may be understood, and what it was that rendered them worthy of the Crown of Heaven. To gather *Recollections* about them, is a duty of piety toward the deceased, and it offers a useful service to those still living. What a beautiful inheritance has been left to us by the words and examples of the Reverend fathers and Brothers who have preceded us! The sweet odor of virtue, especially of some of them, still remains fragrant in our midst, and in our city and throughout the Diocese. However, since time destroys everything, it has already robbed us of a good part of so many pious memories, it was the earnest wish of all that these *Reminiscences* should be written.

The thought of ever having them printed did not dawn on us until a short time ago. As the celebration of the Priestly Jubilee of our Superior, Fr. Peter Vignola approached, this thought came to us. Therefore, there was much haste in compiling, as best we could, the information contained herein. We present here the results of our efforts, in the short time that was available to us. Hence, there are not a few defects, but may the reader pardon us, considering rather the good intention we had of satisfying the desires of all, and of adding one more tribute to the anniversary being celebrated by our most beloved Superior and Father.

Verona, from the Stimate, September 1, 1886.

The Priests of the Stimate

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BRIEF REMARKS

THE CONGREGATION OF APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES: FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF BISHOPS

Its Origin – Difficulties – Nature and Scope

During the year 1810¹, all religious orders were suppressed. A man of God, Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, a gem of the Veronese Clergy, was transferred by Bishop Liruti to the Parish of Sts. Firmus and Rusticus. As a Curate for ten years in his home parish of St. Paul's in *Campo Marzo*, he had accomplished much good. However, it was in this next parish where he went to live that the Lord was waiting to communicate to him His special designs. A most successful Parish Mission was conducted at Saints Firmus and Rusticus by the celebrated Missionary Apostolic, Monsignor Louis Pacetti. With his ardent zeal, Fr. Gaspar took an active part in this Parish Mission. During it, he felt within himself ever more clearly, the inspiration from heaven to dedicate himself to this type of life. He manifested this idea of his to a group of priest friends of his, who had long considered him as their Father and Master. They gave their word that they were ready to follow him.

Therefore, on November 4, 1816, he, with his former pupil of the old Oratory of St. Paul's in Campo Marzo, Fr. John Mary Marani [2] and his beloved Paul Zanoli, first withdrew from the world. They took up residence as poor men, in a little house next to the Church of the Stigmata². The property included all the area of our present House, as well as that of the Convent of St. Teresa³. The Church and the gardens had been offered to him by the Very Reverend Father Galvani⁴.

In addition to these, there was another piece of property, including a garden, at the *Dereletti*, situated near the Parish Church of St. Stephen's – and still another building near the Parish of the Most Holy Trinity⁵.

¹ Translator's Note: in the course of this translation, the page numbers of the original Italian edition of this work will be added in square parenthesis, as follows: [..].

² This was an old Oratory under the care of the *Confreres of the Stigmata of St. Francis*, which had been disbanded by the law of Napoleon's suppression.

³ This was an old Monastery of Discalced Carmelites.

⁴ Fr. Galvani was a priest of great talent, vast knowledge and exemplary virtue. He was 'Lector' of Theology in our Diocesan Seminary, and Arch-Priest of St. John's in Foro. From the time he had Fr. Bertoni as his student, he came to love and esteem him for his virtues. When he learned of the great good he was doing and had planned for the Church, Fr. Galvani asked him to accept all those places he had purchased by himself from the Government. He wished only that Fr. Bertoni would assume the gratuitous duty of giving a liberal arts education to the young boys, then being taught there by two priests, whom Fr. Galvani was supporting in the little House next to the Stimate.

⁵ This was part of a very ancient Convent and Abbey, founded in the 12th century, together with the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, by the Vallambrosian Monks.

From the outset, they were occupied in teaching school to young boys. Somewhat later, other priests joined them: Fr. Gramego, Fr. Farinati, Fr. Bragato, Fr. Brugnoli and Fr. Cartolari. They were able to offer a complete high school curriculum, and some elementary classes. The place certainly did not provide any comfort. The Church, although architecturally it did have some merit, had served previously as a black-smith shop, and was badly in need of renovation. On one side, there was a little Oratory, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, that is still standing today. Next to the Church and this little Oratory, five little rooms had been added on to the eastern and northerly sides. These were in a sad state of disarray, and could not have been improved without undertaking costly renovations. The entire complex, then, was in very poor condition. In order to maintain the School, our Fathers had to transport the furniture in and out of these rooms every day, and return it all in the evening. This was required because at night these rooms would serve as bed rooms, and then in the morning, they would be converted into class rooms. After serving as sleeping quarters for two, or more of the Fathers, in the morning they would have to provide these same rooms with all the necessary implements for school⁶.

[3] However, these few rooms did not suffice. The choir stall, the sacristy and the body of the Church were also used as class rooms. Once the Church was renovated and suitably decorated, thought was given to improve their own living quarters. Fr. Gaspar, therefore, took back from the Convent of St. Teresa a small piece of land, so that a suitable building might be built, that would require this additional extension. His idea was to construct a comfortable dwelling for his sons, and also provide the much needed space for the eight classes which the school soon included.

For this reason, in the year 1823, a well-planned and pleasant building was begun. It was to be a solid structure, and even elegant, that was of uncommon practicality. In addition to its advantages of style, it was well ventilated by means of a court-yard, which covered the entire interior of the plan. On the north side, it was closed off by a wall, that separated it from St. Teresa's Convent.

The new house was then provided with a copious library. Fr. Bertoni had set aside the two largest rooms in the center of the building for this purpose, and filled them with more than a thousand volumes of the rarest and most accredited editions. This library was so well planned that its books sufficed to serve magnificently for any group of studious men⁷, especially of the sacred sciences. We should point out here that our early confreres assisted in the construction of this building.

How wonderful and edifying it was to see them, right after they had left their class rooms, put down their books and pens, to take their place at the side of the workmen. They assisted them in carrying the lime and bricks, and joined them in their

⁶ cf. The Biography of Fr. Bertoni written by Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe.

⁷ cf. Fr. Giacobbe's Biography of Fr. Bertoni.

fatigue. May their labors, on this holly ground protect it, sanctify it, and make it fructify!

At last, the building was furnished, the Church was opened and new Oratories were built, and the old ones were renovated. The thought behind it all was that an education in school was not considered [4] more important than was the moral and religious training of the boys. Our Fathers consecrated themselves with renewed vigor and fervor to the well-being of the youth, by means of teaching school. The Very Reverend Father Bertoni was the Prefect, or the Director of all the classes.

However, this was not the only work that our early confreres undertook. **They preached the Word of God, either through catechism classes, or the Spiritual Exercises.** They sat for long hours in the **Tribune of Penance**. They assisted the **imprisoned** and the **sick**, and they dedicated themselves to long **study** and **prayer**. For them, this activity was their daily bread. As for their virtue and perfection, this is still on the lips of everyone who knew them. The odor of their holy lives still is diffused strongly and sweetly.

The example of the Founder, and the observance of his every word and example, was for them the only Rule and Constitution. Thus they lived without the title, as men bound to regular observance. The world, which is ever most curious, and capable of spying on such souls and finding defects in them, could only say of them that in mortification, they were excessive beyond measure. This was particularly noted in that they ate and drank as poor men.

Who would believe that in this discomfort and voluntary poverty, they were also so happy and content that it was a pleasure just to see them, or to listen to them. They were ready to bear any burden or fatigue, as if these things were nothing, or not difficult for them. They would accept the most arduous and displeasing assignments, as well as those that were distasteful to them. They acquiesced to all that their Superior asked of them ⁸.

They continued in this life until 1844. During that year, the Jesuits opened a high school at St. Sebastian's. Because of the great esteem he had for those priests, Fr. Gaspar felt that they would provide better for the literary and religious formation of the youth. Furthermore, he was also short handed, so he closed the school at the Stimate.

[5] Then began a period of trial for the holy man. A number of his priests had died, others had left, and practically no one had the courage to give his name to this Congregation. The reason, it was said, was that the penance of Fr. Bertoni was fearful! Some priests of the Oratory of St. Philip, who were very close to him, had told him many times in jest that if he wished his Congregation to grow, he ought to place over the door this inscription in large letters: *Here you can eat, drink and sleep!* However, it is hardly likely that anyone one would have believed it.

⁸ ib.

His answer to this comment would be: 'In the early days of a foundation, what will be mitigated of itself, with changing times and changing needs, could never be considered excessive.' However, several years before his death, he made it known that everyone was to have proper nourishment. They were to keep a just balance between abundance and need, and this was written into his Constitutions. Nevertheless, his beloved family, rather than growing, was becoming smaller right before his eyes, as the years passed.

Now it seems incredible, but Fr. Bertoni did not lessen in the least his efforts to increase and improve this family. He tirelessly gathered books from every source that he could, he organized the library, he dictated the rules and discipline and governed the house as though the Congregation was flourishing more than it ever had; So great were his hopes that success would crown this endeavor, which God Himself had inspired, that he would say that if he knew for certain that on the morrow the world was to end, he still would have gone on in his work. To inspire his afflicted sons with this same confidence, he used to say: 'Have courage! – Let us trust in God, and let us leave to Him the future, as He can do all things!'

When anyone would leave, he would turn to the others and say: 'And do you, too, wish to go? I will stay here alone, with the help of God, until my death.' In brief, then, it can be said of him that **he hoped against hope!**

Then, the year 1848 came, the period that was so disturbed because of the insurrection among the people. The Servant of God rules [6] over his sons with such prudence that they did not suffer too much in those troubled times. There was, however, one exception. Two of the priests were falsely accused of trying to bribe some soldiers. It was said that while the soldiers were going to Confession, the priests offered them some money to desert. They were put in prison, and they faced the danger of even worse treatment, even the death penalty. A number of important citizens intervened for them, and finally, their innocence was established, and they were set free⁹.

Between the years 1849 and 1850, many soldiers were camped in Verona, in an effort to stamp out the rebellion. Since our House was large and spacious, and almost entirely uninhabited, it was taken over and used as a barracks for soldiers. This provided a new field for the zeal of our Fathers and Brothers, and they managed to win many souls back to the sacraments and to the practice of Religion. The soldiers remained until 1854, but, the year before, our Venerable Founder was called to heaven to receive the reward of his heroic mortification and constancy. He named Fr. Benciolini as the heir of all his ownings.

Fr. Marani succeeded the Venerable Founder. In the year 1854, he was in Rome, at the feet of the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Pius IX. The Pope blessed him and the little Congregation, and he expressed the desire that this **Little Flock** [these are

⁹ cf. The Life of Fr. Innocent Venturini, an early member of the Congregation.

the very words of the Pontiff] **might grow** [**Crescat Pusillus Grex!**] – and be diffused **for the glory of the Lord, for the good of souls and for the assistance of Bishops!**

The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars examined the spirit of this new Congregation, the End to which it tends and the laws by which it is governed. On the 16th day of April 1855, it published a Decree in which was stated that His Holiness has ordered that this Congregation, and its Scope, by this present Decree, is to be commended and accorded the most ample praise [**Decretum Laudis - the Decree of Praise**].

On the 30th of September of that same year, in the Church of the Stimmate, the Solemn Canonical Erection of our Institute was held with special ceremonies. The day was all the more sacred due to the presence of His excellence, Bishop Benedict deRiccabona. To him, Fr. Marani, kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, made his Profession of Vows. The others, then, one by one, kneeling before him, for the first time, they pronounced the Formula of Vows of perpetual Poverty, Chastity and Obedience¹⁰.

The blessing of Pius IX, and his expressed wish – **that the Little Flock might grow!** - soon began to reap fruit. ‘Outstanding priests’ of Verona, and of other places, as well as many young men and boys of varying ages, began to seek admission¹¹.

The Convent of the Most Blessed Trinity, mentioned above, was renovated, and done over in a most suitable manner. There, the young members were trained, and they lived there peacefully until 1866. When the political storms of that era broke, a period that was so threatening for the Church and Religious Orders, Fr. Marani sought for our men another place to live. For his Success, we will profess eternal gratitude to His Highness, the Prince-Bishop of Trent, Benedict deRiccabona, for his most cordial hospitality. The storm then unleashed in all its fury, and it struck us most forcefully. On August 27, 1867, there began a time of most harsh trial for our religious family, that was almost totally destroyed.

Our House and meager funds were confiscated by the government. The Convent of St. Teresa, and a great part of the House of the Stimmate were taken over, and used as schools. A few of our confreres were treated as tolerated guests in

¹⁰ These priests were: Cajetan Brugnoli, Francis Benciolini [who is still living], Innocent Venturini and John Baptist Lenotti. The Coadjutor Brothers were: Paul Zanoli, Louis Ferrari [who is still living], and Francis Stevanoni. Many periodicals in Germany, and some papers in Italy, as well as the Jesuit periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica* [Series II, Vol. XII, p. 702] had articles concerning our Congregation.

¹¹ The practice of accepting and training young boys for the Congregation was begun by Fr. Bertoni. He himself accepted Louis Ferrari, aged 14, Charles Fedelini, who was 16. John Baptist Lenotti and Louis Biadego were also very young. This conforms to our Rule that determines the minimum age for acceptance to the 14 years.

their own beloved home, so that they could care for the services in the Church. Fr. Marani, with extreme regret, retired with a few others, to a rented house. This was the Massalongo home, facing the Giusti Gardens, in the Parish of *Sancta Maria in Organis*. He died there in near oblivion in 1871.

This sad state of affairs lasted for six years, during which time it appeared clearly [8] what esteem the citizens of Verona had for the Congregation. These people were the heirs of the faith and the piety of their grand-parents who had been students at the Stimmate. They brought material comfort to the agony of an Institute that had always given of itself, without asking for any material retribution. Other benefactors also were not lacking. They were prompted to come to our assistance by that Father, Who from heaven, watched over His afflicted sons.

In Him, we have placed all our trust, and in the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph, the Patrons of our Congregation and we were not deluded. The legal justice of our case that was most evident, finally forced the government to propose a compromise that was accepted: whatever pertained to the substance of the property would be restored, but not the expenses incurred in the long course of the litigation. Complete justice is not to be hoped for on this earth.

By this time, the Superior General was **Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, who was an heir of the genuine spirit of Fr. Bertoni, by whom he had been trained.** He completed the negotiations begun by Fr. Marani, to have a House of our own, in the vicinity of the city of Trent. Shortly afterwards, he recalled the students to Verona, and lodged them in St. Teresa's Convent. Fr. Lenotti died in the odor of sanctity in the year 1875, and he was succeeded by our present Superior, Fr. Peter Vignola. He established at St. Theresa's the Novitiate. Before 1866, this was conducted at the House of the Most Holy Trinity, which in 1877, was sold to the Salesian Sisters.

In this same year, a House was opened at Bassano, with **a youth program** and a **high school**. In the meantime, this has been converted into a high school. In 1876, **a House was established at Parma, where our Fathers, in addition to teaching elementary school, also conduct the Oratories, teach Catechism, preaching the Spiritual Exercises, and perform all ministries to which they are called.** On the 4th of November last year, the Congregation also went to Pavia, where the Fathers conduct a **night school** during the winter; for the remainder of the year, they have practically continuous **preaching assignments** in every part of that diocese.

Among all the Houses of the Congregation, however, because of its antiquity, and the good done there, ***Santa Maria del Giglio, or the Dereletti***¹², mentioned earlier in this historical sketch, merits a place of honor. In 1836, when Fr. Marani and Brother Zanolli were sent there by the Founder to take up residence, there was only a squalid dwelling. Even at that time, it was already old; there was also the dark and decaying Church. Concerning this Church, Fr. Marani had begun the construction of

¹² This was formerly a place for accepting abandoned orphans.

a new one, but the work was interrupted by the happenings of 1866. It was then completed by Fr. Lenotti in 1874. The House was most recently rebuilt and renovated for the use of the community, by the present Superior, Fr. Peter Vignola. The Fathers conduct there an **Oratory** on holy days, for boys. There is a **religious instruction** every night, and the priests are frequently called to **preach** in the parish church of St. Stephen's. **More than anything else, they hear confessions**, especially on the Vigils of the solemnities until about mid-night. They start right in again the next morning for about four more hours. In this work, after Fr. Marani others have been assigned, and have labored with great zeal, but Fr. Francis Benciolini merits a special mention.

Turning now to the Mother House, that is the Stimate, we will note than in the last decade, the number of workers has grown, so that **the elementary school** was reopened in 1878. Gradually, there was also added the **high school** course, and all the teachers have received the required diploma. The other members render an assiduous contribution to **the sacred and apostolic ministry**.

From what has been said up until now, **the nature and the purpose of the Congregation can be seen**. It is entitled: ***Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops***. Our Founder did not limit himself to this, or that ministry, nor to a few determined cases and matters. The Congregation was intended to **assume every good work in the service of God and souls**, so that all those who have embraced this manner of life, **must be prepared and ready for this**. However, it is **proper** for this Congregation, **in addition to occupying itself in giving the Holy Missions [10]**, to **teach** every branch of literature and the sciences, to hear **Confessions**, to give the Spiritual exercises to every class of souls, to explain the **Catechism** in the schools of Christian Doctrine, to establish the **Marian Congregations** in the Churches of the Congregation. These should be promoted where it is possible. The members of the Congregation are to assist the sick and the dying, they instruct and assist those in prisons, they substitute for, and accept permanently **Chairs of Philosophy and Theology**, and **lend whatever assistance the Bishop may have need of**, even unexpectedly.

The **manner** in which **the** Institute fulfills its end is, as our rule states: ***to serve, or to assist the Bishop, in those things in which, due to different times and circumstances, he may have need***. The Bishop, then, asks the Superior of the Congregation, for one or more, **to perform some office, or duty, in conformity with the spirit of this Congregation, and according to its rules**. There must be in this Congregation, individuals who are qualified in the judgment of this same Superior.

This Institute is placed under the protection of Mary most holy, and of St. Joseph, whose examples are proposed for our imitation, with divine help. This is required of anyone who desires to serve His Divine Majesty in this Congregation.

This, then, is the simple and very brief history of the beginning and the development of this very small **Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries**. This is

the **nature and spirit** that pervades it. It also makes clear that this union of priests, which was brought together by the fortunate decision of Fr. Bertoni, was not a work of chance. Nothing in this world every happens by chance, nor do the works of man, who, of himself, can do nothing. Everything is ordained and disposed by the infinite wisdom of God, Which *reaches therefore from end to end mightily, and orders all things sweetly* [Ws 8:1].

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Compendium
of the Life
of
Fr. GASPAR BERTONI

Chapter 1
His Boyhood

[11] That venerable man, who by Divine Providence, was destined to be our Father, Master and Model in learning and in virtue, Gaspar Bertoni, was born on the 9th of October 1777. At that time, the ‘most serene Republic of St. Mark’ governed the region, the Doge then being John Mocenigo, Louis IV. The fortunate parents of the child were Francis and Brunora [Ravelli]. The Bertoni family was an old, and almost patrician family, and well endowed with the goods of fortune. They were highly regarded because of the offices held by their forebears, but more because of their own faith and piety.

On that very same day [?], the child received holy Baptism in the parish Church of St. Paul’s in *Campo Marzo*, and was given the name, Gaspar. He was the first and only [?] fruit of this worthy marriage.

In caring for his physical needs, his Mother nurtured him as well in tender piety. With the passing of time, this increased, and was wisely developed. He responded by greatly consoling her maternal heart, and gave her the highest hopes. He was richly endowed with natural talent, but even more with a high moral ideal. He [12] never showed any inclination for amusements or diversions, but contented himself with little things, as an altar he constructed as a young boy. He never asked for much from his parents, but was content with whatever they gave him.

During these years, he manifested a conduct that was extraordinary. He would never ask for bread, nor fruit, nor cake – nor even for a drink of water. Put under the care of a governess, he behaved similarly with her. She used to call him ‘a little saint’ [*santino*], or the *angelic* Gaspar. Whoever came to know him, soon admired his candor, his innocence and his manners. They came to ask for the clothes that he had worn as a baby, hoping thereby to obtain special graces and blessings for their own children. Often enough, their hopes were realized. The words of Tobias could well apply to young Gaspar, when ***he was younger than any other... yet, he did no childish thing...*** [Tb 1:4].

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Chapter 2 EARLY YEARS

When he was about eight years old, his father noted that he had an acute and quick mind, and that he was most anxious to study. Here, therefore, sent the boy to the municipal school at St. Sebastian's. At this period, the school was well known for its faculty, and among the teachers were Fr. Avesani and Fr. Fortis. From the outset, the young boy gave a clear indication that his was a most unusual memory, which he used with much diligence. His lessons were always meticulously prepared, and he was gifted with a very clear diction. Even more noticeable, though, were his modesty, his affability with his companions, his obedience and respect for his teachers, and most especially, his piety.

After he had received his First Holy Communion, he received it every Sunday with visible fervor. He never neglected to save some of his time for meditation, spiritual reading and the examen of conscience. He manifested a most tender piety toward Mary, and he often invoked her as his Mother, and as the Seat of Wisdom, for help in his studies.

[13] There can be no wonder, then, that his progress in both his piety and study was marvelous. In him it was clearly evident that ***the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord...*** [Ps 110:11].

This, then, is a summary of his early years.

††† Chapter 3 AS A YOUNG MAN

When he had completed the four years of Grammar, with utmost praise, he then undertook the study of letters, and then philosophy, in accord with the division of studies in that era. By now, Gaspar was 14 years of age. He seemed to have a natural talent for literature. Before long, he was ranked in the upper level of the class, and received both the plaudits, as well as the prizes in the public competitions and the *accademias* that used to be held with much solemnity.

At the age of 17, he was enrolled in the class of Philosophy that was taught by Fr. Fortis. The penetrating mind of the young student found a haven in this study. It was this subject, more than all the others, that implanted in his spirit the principles of thought of which the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, was the author and father. Being imbued with these principles, as a priest, he was able to combat the most astute of errors which then afflicted the Church, which were called 'Jansenism.'

His piety and virtue, instead of lessening, all this while were becoming stronger. In imitation of the Gospel anecdote, he put his hand to the plow and never looked backward. He carried out his work with ever greater alacrity and ardor.

To keep his passions in check, he began the practice of mortification. He was most frugal in his eating habits, and slept but briefly. This latter, was tormented with little stones, or chips of wood, or bits of iron, that he had placed with much care, between the sheets of his bed.

He always avoided being the center of attraction, and denied himself even the slightest satisfactions. One day, at *Campo Fiore*, a balloonist was giving an exhibition, the first of its kind ever presented in Verona. The novelty of it had attracted a huge throng of spectators to the large field [14]. The Bertonio0me opened out onto this field, and Gaspar could have enjoyed the spectacle by this favored position, and merely going out on his balcony. The balloon rose high into the sky, taking with it the courageous airman which brought the applause and cheers from the crowd, for his excellent take-off. Gaspar, however, did not make a move to witness it, but rather knelt in prayer for the one who had submitted himself to so bold [especially for that time] and so dangerous an attempt.

I will add that he was most plain in his manner of dress. As for money, whatever he had, he used to give away to the needy. Because of this austerity and voluntary poverty, his friends used to call him ‘the Capuchin’ - not so much out of derision, as out of admiration. Of his charity, I will say only that it was outstanding. Even in those times, he manifested a special concern for the spiritual well-being of his friends. He used every possible means to move them to frequent the sacraments, to attend Church and the Christian Doctrine classes. He had a very kind manner in offering corrections. Of his obedience, I will repeat only what his Mother said, expressing her genuine satisfaction concerning him: ‘If all mothers had sons with a fraction of the obedience that mine has, they would indeed be most happy and fortunate!’

It should not be concluded from all this that he was not a sociable person, or that he was inaccessible, or melancholic. On the contrary, his virtuous life was permeated with a most wonderful temperament. He was cheerful and pleasant, and he was well liked by everyone – ***he was beloved of God and of men*** [Ecclesiasticus 45:1].

This, then, is how he was as a young man.

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Chapter 4 AS A SEMINARIAN

‘Why do you delay so long in giving your name to the service of the Lord?’ – this was the greeting of his zealous Pastor of St. Paul’s, Fr. Francis Girardi. For some time, all the signs of a priestly vocation had seemed most evident in him. However, the boy still wanted more time. He prayed, asked for guidance – then, after a spiritual retreat, he was vested by this same Fr. Girardi in clerical garb. It was the 28th of December 1796, and Gaspar was 19 years of age.

There was supreme joy in the entire Bertoni family. His parents were quite different from those of other young men, and they considered themselves blessed to give him, although their only child, to the Lord. Once vested in the sacred habit, his was a way of life that well served as a model for others similarly called. The hours of day were divided between his scholastic requirements in the Diocesan Seminary, and those of his Parish Church. The hours of the night were consecrated to prayer and study, and very few of them were reserved for sleep. The days free from school were spent entirely at the services of the Church. His fellow students testified many years later that they had never seen a more diligent, more zealous and a more devoted seminarian than was young Bertoni. They felt he was convinced that ***to serve God, was to reign!***

He made a special study of the sacred ceremonies and Gregorian chant, which he then taught to his companions. His special interest on the holy days was the youth. He would lead the young boys to Church, teach them Catechism and watched over them attentively. He directed them to wholesome recreations, so that it seemed that this phase of the apostolate was his own special vocation. Bertoni, then, was a model of a genuine seminarian.

One day, during the annual retreat, when the retreat master was speaking of the true clerical life, and the one that should be lived by all, he named Bertoni as the model for those who were present. Because of his modesty, he was completely embarrassed, as was most evident by his reaction, and seemed to withdraw into himself.

Nevertheless, this statement could not have been more true, nor more eloquent nor more effective. As for his theological studies, suffice it to say that understanding how necessary knowledge is for a priest, he applied himself to them with ardor, that reaped abundant fruit. His earlier studies served as a marvelous preparation for them [16] with such diligence. He was greatly assisted by the dedicated Professors that he had, as, for example, the Abbot Trevisani, who was the Prefect and Director of Studies, and also Fr. Galvani. This latter was soon impressed with the virtue and the ability of young Bertoni, and fostered for him a particular affection, such as a father would have for a beloved son. The young student, on his part, had a similar affection for his moral Professor.

In addition to the class hours, he dedicated another nine or ten hours to theological studies. From this time, he acquired a deep love for the *Summa* of St. Thomas. Before completing his years at the Diocesan seminary, he had read the *Summa* from beginning to end. He had also reflected on it once, twice, or possibly three times, with much profit. Hence, in the doubts, or questions that were presented, he would respond with this work in hand. His grasp of it amazed his teachers.

This, then, was Gaspar Bertoni during his seminary years, both at the Seminary and outside it. He can rightly be placed among those who are ***commended for the gift of disciple***. [Ws 7:14].

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Chapter 5
AS A PRIEST

Prepared in this spirit, and with the extraordinary goodness of his life, as well as with the profound knowledge that he had acquired, he received the priesthood on September 20, 1800. This was only five months after his ordination to the Diaconate, and he had not yet completed his 23rd year. He received, therefore, a dispensation for the thirteen months that he lacked, by means of a Pontifical Brief.

It is difficult to describe his zeal in carrying out the serious obligations of the priesthood. Realizing that he was a mediator between God and man, and the dispenser of the Divine Mysteries, he resolved to increase ever more in virtue and holiness, by walking in the presence of God, to reach perfection.

He made the Breviary and his daily Mass, his delight. The former, he truly recited *worthily, attentively and devoutly*, observing the following resolutions he had formulated for himself: 1. Look at the *Ordo*; 2. Put the ribbons in order, also those for the Psalms; 3. have composure in your sentiments, and in your posture; 4. recite it standing, or kneeling, or, when necessary, sitting, without leaning back, or being restless; 5. recite it with sufficient pause; 6. pronounce the words carefully, noting, too, when the words are not to be accented; 7. read with such attention that it will not be necessary to repeat a single word; 8. do not stop to grasp the meaning, as this can be looked up with then recitation is over.

He also celebrated the divine sacrifice with such faith, piety and recollection that he seemed to be entirely absorbed in God during it. As it narrated about some Saint, those who had the good fortune of assisting at his Masses, stated that they could not see him as so recollected, without their being moved to compunction, and tenderness of heart.

It was his piety and love for God that led him to the altar. It was beautiful to watch him arguing with a man who wanted to offer him a sum of money, which he always refused, for the celebration of a Mass. Fr. Bertoni just would not accept it. Finally, however, he gave in, but only on condition that the sum received would be used to help the poor.

Because of all this, it came to be said that the new priest, Fr. Bertoni, was, in the words of Malachy: ***the Angel of the Lord***.

Those who heard him preach the Word of God, even as a young priest, had a similar impression. Although he was endowed with a certain facility for speaking, and was equipped with sound doctrine, he never excused himself from study and effort.

He prayed and meditated the more, and he came to preach *not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the spirit of power.* [cf. 1 Co 2:4]. He had a way of touching hearts deeply, and it was said of him - *he speaks as an angel: because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.* [cf. Mt 2:7].
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Chapter 6

Fr. GASPAR, AS A MISSIONARY OF YOUTH

One day, Fr. Gaspar was praying and meditating in the Choir of St. Paul's Church, and his venerable Pastor, Fr. Girardi, came up to him. The young priest, in his surplice, with the stole over his arm, seemed to be waiting there for any task. The pastor stated; 'Oh, Fr. Gaspar, to me, you seem to be a **missionary.**' 'I hope so', he responded. 'However,' the Pastor added: 'understand me well; you are to be a **Missionary of the Youth.**' Fr. Gaspar answered that he would be just that, as this was the wish of his Pastor. 'All right, then,' concluded Fr. Girardi, 'I entrust to you these children, because I want them ready for Holy Communion by the next Holy Day. You will be their **Missionary.** From now on, consider them as your responsibility.' He accepted this **Mission** and carried it out successfully.

When the happy day of the First Holy Communion for the children arrived, Fr. Bertoni brought them all over to the Rectory, and opened it up to them. His idea was that the holy resolutions that they made that day, might be carried through. From that day onward, they gathered there with him on all the Feast Days, and they had devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin. He always manifested toward them a great love and solicitude. The children responded to this invitation in ever increasing numbers, and with an unusual enthusiasm.

After a while, the Oratory moved from the rectory to the Church of the Sisters of St. Francis de Paola. There, they were better organized, and the Congregation of youth, that came to be known as the Marian Oratory, was begun. From this one, other Oratories that have done so much for the youth, took their norms and organizational plan. All those that sprang up throughout Verona, were soon flocked with eager members. It is to Fr. Bertoni that the credit is due for having instituted them, and their marvelous expansion

It would suffice to cite just one instance to have some idea of the good that was derived through these Oratories. There was a certain boy [19] who made fun of those who attended the Marian Oratory. He spoke of them in the worst possible way. One time, partly out of curiosity, and partly because of an invitation extended to him by one of his friends, he, too attended. His thought was that he could find fault with the program and ridicule it. However, the very opposite occurred. He was so impressed with the piety of the other boys, with Fr. Bertoni's pleasant way and the singing, that he, too knelt at Fr. Gaspar's feet. He asked him to hear his Confession, and then to receive him as a new member of the Oratory. This conversion was not only extraordinary, but it was equally sincere and persevering.

Fr. Bertoni manifested an assiduous and paternal care for his Oratory. He wanted the young boys with him throughout the day and on holidays, when there was no school. He then invited them to his own home, where they passed the time in a pleasant atmosphere. His interest in them also covered the other days of the week – he helped them in their studies, and visited them where they worked.

The rules he had laid down he wanted observed by each member. In a short time, the boys gave such example that they won the admiration of the city as well as the parish. In an excellent manner, he fulfilled his role as the **Missionary of the Youth**.

As time went on, other Oratories began – in St. Stephen's, in St. Lawrence's, at St. Firmus' Major and gradually in all the parishes of the city. Each one of these was established either with his direct intervention, or with his advice. In truth, Gaspar Bertoni understood well the words of the Divine Master: **Let the little children come to Me!** [Mk 10:14].

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Chapter 7

Fr. GASPAR AS A MISSIONARY OF THE PEOPLE, THE CLERGY AND SISTERS

The zeal that inflamed the heart of Fr. Bertoni for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, made of him a great **Missionary** – not only of the **Youth**, but also to the **People, the Clergy and the Virgins of the Lord**. After he had been imbued with the spirit of the admirable book, **The Spiritual Exercises** of St. Ignatius [20], he dedicated himself to **preaching** them with such art and ardor that soon he reaped through them most abundant results. The many courses of them that he preached in the Church of St. Ignatius to large audiences, both of students and the general laity, are memorable.

The **Parish Mission** at which he assisted the Missionary Apostolic, Monsignor Louis Pacetti, is especially worthy of particular mention. During it, there were numberless and sincere conversions, which divine grace wrought during this Mission. This won the admiration of the entire city which profited by these, and the memory of this Mission is still retained. As a result, many years later, Fr. Bertoni established that his sons, in perpetual appreciation and gratitude to the Lord, were to recite every evening after the **De Profundis** for the deceased, two **Gloria's** in honor of Sts. Firmus and Rusticus, the protectors of that Church and the **Parish Mission** conducted in it.

We know that he saw on that occasion the marvelous good that **Missions** could produce among the laity, in the reformation of their ways. From this, the thought came to him of that Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries which he was called by God to found.

Even as a very young priest, he was called to be the **Missionary to the Clergy**. The efficacy of his zeal and his preaching were soon felt. Monsignor Pacetti had come to know Fr. Bertoni's spirit and learning, and so, called upon him many times for assistance. The **Retreat** that they both gave to the **Clergy of Mantua** was long remembered. So successful was this Retreat, that the old priests from there, even up until recent times, used to look back on it with joy and wonder. Monsignor Pacetti later went to Rome and arranged it so that by Decree of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, dated December 20, 1817, Fr. Bertoni was declared a Missionary Apostolic.

He also was assigned by his Superiors as a **Missionary to Religious Sisters**. This did not entail just preaching the Spiritual exercises to them, but it also involved **spiritual direction**. In this period, Venerable Marchese di Canossa instituted her Daughters of Charity. Fr. Gaspar was chosen for this assignment by the [21] Pastor of the Diocese, first as her Confessor, and then as Spiritual Director. The holy Foundress and her Daughters recognized that in great part they were indebted to him for the development of their holy and providential Institute. In their behalf, their zealous Spiritual Director did not spare himself any fatigue, study or prayer, so that these Daughters of Charity would become worthy of their name. In compiling their most judicious rules, there is no way of knowing just how much the Venerable di Canossa was assisted by his direction and counsel. As a testimony of their perennial gratitude, the Sisters wanted his portrait for their Mother House, and under it was the following simple, but eloquent inscription:

Fr. Bertoni, first Confessor of the Daughters of Charity.

Therefore, he carried out in an excellent manner the role of **Missionary to the People, the Clergy and the Sisters**. He was a man of God, who made himself all things to all men, to gain all for Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 8

Fr. GASPAR AT THE STIMATE

The year 1816 was more disastrous than any other, because of the famine and the wide-spread need that desolated our beautiful country. It was then that Fr. Galvani, whom we have seen as the Lector of Moral Theology, asked Fr. Bertoni to assume, with some companions, the task of teaching at a tuition-free school. There were elementary classes, as well as those of high school level, including Latin courses. Up until this time, Fr. Galvani had supported them at the Stimate. He had come into possession of the House and Church there.

Fr. Bertoni was most ready and willing to accept this offer that had been made to him. With one priest, his most faithful friend, Fr. John Mary Marani, and with the pious young Brother, Paul Zanoli, he took over the Stimate, where he would live the remainder of his life. It was the feast of St Charles, November 4th of that year, 1816.

[22] This was the beginning and foundation of our small Congregation, whose history is related just prior to this sketch of the life of our Venerable Father and Founder.

Very shortly thereafter other excellent priests mentioned above came to join him. These were Fr. Gaetano Gramego, Fr. Farinati and Fr. Brugnoli, as well as some good men, who like Zanoli, were called by the name of 'Brother.' All of these mentioned here entered during the year 1817.

We will relate here briefly what their life in those times was like, and the occupations our first Fathers undertook. They did not in those days have a stable body of rules according to which they lived. The teaching and the example, however, of Fr. Bertoni, and the compliance to his every wish and counsel served as their law, and their inviolable and sure rule. The order maintained was perfect, as was their regular observance. They were so observant of the evangelical counsels, it was as if they had already made a profession of them. As for the religious virtues, mortification and abstinence, these served as principles for them. They emulated communities of the strictest observance. Suffice it to say, that for many years, they never ate rice, but only beans and vegetables, and these were served in oil. They had not been commanded to these austerities, but merely followed the example of Fr. Bertoni.

Their love for poverty was shown not only by their meager diet, but also by their ordinary and plain clothing, and their austere living quarters. This was so even though every one of them had come from comfortable homes. In their observance, though, they were even more worthy of admiration and praise. They were ready at any indication of their Superior to **go anywhere** for the ministry, even when this was unexpectedly assigned by him. They seemed to lack personal preferences and desires. Their duties between such assignments were always with an eye to the **service of God**, and the ministry went on without respite.

Teaching school was the fundamental duty, as **it was for this purpose primarily** that they had come together. The rest of their time was employed in **the preaching of the Word of God, through Catechism classes, and in the Spiritual Exercises**. They also gave long hours to the **Tribunal of Penance**. They helped out in **prisons** and assisted the **sick**. They considered the time remaining after these occupations that they gave to **prayer** and their **severe program of studies**, as their relaxation and rest. What was even more edifying in them was to see them in the exercise of this **varied program**, always happy and jovial, much like the valiant Maccabbees, when they were fighting the battles of the Lord: **they fought with cheerfulness the battle of Israel** [1 M 3:2]. According to the masters of the spiritual life, this is a sign of perfect virtue. There is no way of expressing the joy of Fr. Bertoni's heart in giving him sons who were so judicious. However, his profound humility would not permit him to reflect that the greater glory for all this was due him.

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Chapter 9

Fr. BERTONI AS TEACHER AND EDUCATOR

Among all the difficulties of life, perhaps the most arduous is to give a good education to the youth. However, this is all the more advantageous, not only to the individuals and their families, but to the Church and to society. For this endeavor, the greatest of men have given their love and dedicated their study. One such a man was Fr. Gaspar. Just as **the principal reason for which he came to the Stimmate was to conduct a school**, so he dedicated himself to it whole heartedly and to make it a success.

God blessed his endeavor. The student body grew in number with the passing of time. It became necessary to add classes and new grades, both of the elementary and high school levels. The building that they were using was both too small and inadequate, and so Fr. Bertoni set about a new construction. First of all, however, he renovated the Church, which had deteriorated and in some sections, was falling down. He restored it to the condition in which we see it today. Then he began the building which was to serve the double purpose of a school and a religious house. This was begun in the year 1823. His enthusiasm, and that of his companions, and they all assisted when they could in the actual construction of it. This project, which was not small, nor without considerable cost, was soon brought to a conclusion, and the end result admirably suited its [24] purpose.

The Founder was dedicated with single purpose to school and to the education of youth. The curriculum of studies included the entire Elementary and High School courses, Grammar and Rhetoric, as has already been said. Fr. Bertoni was the teacher of literature, prefect and director of studies, and also the instructor of the teachers of the other classes. In the entire program, the same method and form of instruction was one and the same.

It was his wish that the boys studying grammar would receive the fundamentals in the Italian and Latin languages. In Rhetoric, his standards were met perfectly that Fr. Trevisani, the most learned among the learned, many times gave him the approbation and praise as a most excellent instructor. The school progressed to the complete satisfaction of everyone, who applied to Fr. Bertoni those words said of the Divine Master: ***He has done all things well!***

The principal concern of Fr. Gaspar, however, was to train the boys in Christian piety, which is useful in every walk of life. ***Piety is useful for all things*** - and it is the foundation of all the virtues. He wanted it practiced in school, in Church, at home, along the street and everywhere.

Let us come now to certain particulars. Holy Mass was celebrated before school: there were short prayers before and after the classes. The Marian Oratory was in operation, confessions were heard every two weeks and every year there was a brief course of the Spiritual Exercises. There was also a special observance every May, the month of the Blessed Virgin. He most often instilled devotion to her in their

young hearts. In addition to all this, he maintained an assiduous and paternal supervision over the conduct of the students. He was both strong and kind in correcting them, as the need would arise, pointing out to them the dangers, and encouraged them on to virtue. In brief, this school was, so to speak, an instruction of morals, and a seminary of holy maxims and of virtue. In the last analysis, this is the only means to make a school educational [25] in the full meaning of that word. With any other ideal, school is both unworthy of its name, and it is destructive. Such are the modern, or 'lay' schools, or whatever other name they may have. From its fruits, a tree is known. The effects of Fr. Bertoni's School were not long in making themselves felt. They were both abundant and most encouraging. Both the parents and the students themselves attest to this in unanimity. The oldest of the alumni from his school still refer to it with sentiments of the most grateful appreciation.

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Chapter 10 Fr. GASPAR AND HIS SEMINARIANS

This holy endeavor of teaching school progressed and their work multiplied. The Lord sent new reinforcements to his servant. There was Fr. Francis Cartolari, of noble birth, who entered in 1822. Shortly afterwards, Fr. Modesto Cainer came, as did a few additional Brothers. A little later, in 1826, Fr. Louis Bragato entered, then Fr. Francis Benciolini in 1829. Fr. Innocent Venturini entered in 1830 and all of these sought admission as ordained priests.

The religious family was not to be lacking its young seminarians. The first ones to enter were graduates of Fr. Bertoni's little school. Charles Fedelini, Louis Biadego, John Baptist Lenotti and Louis Ferrari are to be mentioned here. As they represented the future hopes of Fr. Bertoni, he instructed them with all his love, striving to imbue them with the true ecclesiastical and religious spirit. For the classes in philosophy and theology, he sent them to the Diocesan Seminary, and then assisted and guided them at home, perfecting and developing the instruction they received in their classes. How helpful he was to them was soon noted by their teachers and fellow students, as they always were in the upper brackets of the class. It was his will that they should not neglect any of the ecclesiastical studies, but that they should be well instructed in all of them. He did, however, assign them particular branches of study, that they might become more proficient in them, according to the varying attitudes of each one.

As for teaching them the science of the saints, he was a supreme master. He trained them in the fundamentals, such as [26] breaking their own wills, even when they had been ordained priests. Whenever he found anyone out of breath for having hurried with too much anxiety in the ministry, he would stop the offender right on the spot. He would have him kneel down, and remain there for as long as it took to catch his breath, and then allow him to get up. In this way, souls are formed in many virtues.

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Chapter 11

Fr. GASPAR AS DEFINITOR AND PRO-SYNODAL EXAMINER

The undeniable proof of holiness and learning that our Venerable Founder gave of himself could only acquire for him the veneration and confidence of the Bishops of the Diocese of Verona. As a result, the most urgent matters came to be entrusted to him, and among these was the appointment as **Definitor Theologian and Pro-Synodal Examiner**. He was chosen for these posts first by Bishop Liruti, and then afterwards confirmed in them by Bishop Grasser. Seeing how well he fulfilled these positions, he was then appointed to the most delicate office of the examiner of Vocations. It was not possible for the humility of the servant of God toward off these honors that came to him, nor did his claim of infirmity, his other duties or his own ineptitude have any effect. He simply had to obey. The confidence placed in him by the sacred Pastors never diminished. The definitions that he handed down proved that he was a most diligent student of St. Thomas Aquinas, and that he was well-versed in all of the Saint's writings. Everyone who conversed with him, departed totally satisfied.

The same is to be said of his judgments and opinions that he gave as Pre-Synodal examiner. There was a Fr. Octavian Rossi, who had given up his chair of Sacred Eloquence in the Diocesan Seminary, to accept a parish in Sirmione. One of his students, who is still living, went to him, hoping to persuade him into not accepting the parish, as he would be thereby depriving the city, and the entire Diocese from a greater good, as was derived from his teaching that he imparted to the young hopefuls of the sanctuary. Fr. Rossi answered: 'Calm now, now - to do what I have done, I have had the encouragement and the counsel of Fr. Bertoni!'

[27] Another time, , a newly appointed Pastor came one day to see Fr. Bertoni, and to get his advice if he should still have contact with those of his people who regarded him as a stranger. He was somewhat inclined to abandon them to their own wishes. Fr. Bertoni interrupted him, saying: 'There is always hope in the Mother of Hope, Mary...' Fr. Bertoni then counseled him to be first and foremost, the Pastor of the children. He suggested that he establish the Marian Oratory to invite and attract the youth, and that he should bestow on the children his love and affection, and told him that he would see the results. The new Pastor took this advice, and in a short time, he attracted the hearts, not only of the children, but also of their parents and his entire parish.

As **Examiner of Vocations to the Priesthood**, he was firm in denying his assent to those whom he had judged as not called to the serviced of Christ. Even though there were times that complaints were leveled at him, it was not rare that some of these young men, who had been excluded, returned to express their thanks to him.

On the other hand, he was most affectionate and encouraging toward those whom he had judged that they had a genuine vocation. He would inspire these young men, citing such passages, as: ***I have run the way of Your commandments, since***

You have encouraged my heart! To accept this way of life, there were two principle practices that he would inculcate to the aspirants to the Priesthood: ‘Obedience and Meditation.’ He used to say: ‘...these are what are most perfect in the spiritual life of all clerics, and the most edifying in the House of God...

To bring this Chapter to a close, I will add that Fr. Gaspar was not only enlightened and sure in judging vocations to the Priesthood, but he had the same qualities in **discerning vocations to the religious state** as well. We will cite here the testimony of the celebrated Jesuit, Fr. Viscardini, as the typical view of his contemporaries. For forty years, Fr. Viscardini was the Master of Novices of the Company of Jesus. In this time, he had over 200 Novices, and from time to time, he would send various ones to Fr. Bertoni, if he was unsure of them himself. Fr. Viscardini was most confident in Fr. Bertoni’s judgment.

The Lord, therefore, had filled His servant with wisdom and intelligence: ***And the Lord, with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, filled him. [28]***

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Chapter 12 THE EMINENT VIRTUES OF Fr. GASPAR

Let us consider here the holiness of the life of our Venerable Founder, a little more closely. The life of the just is said to be the life of the Holy Spirit. It is as the light of the day that increases gradually into the brilliance of afternoon. Such was the life of Fr. Bertoni. Those eminent virtues, which were already manifest in him in his earliest childhood, increased more and more with the passing of time. We will make a few remarks only concerning his more outstanding virtues, before bringing this brief biography of his to a close.

His Faith was very much alive. From his vivid sense of the presence of God, he used to walk without a hat, both in the dead of winter, as well as under the summer sun. Every day, he would pray for the grace of martyrdom. His heroic faith was evident in his face, as he celebrated Holy Mass. He was ready and able to defend the faith against anyone who might attack its truths.

There is the episode of Fr. Bertoni walking through Piazza Bra’, and he was passing directly in front of a café’. A certain high spirited man came out and stopped him, to question him in a derisive manner of a dogma of the faith that was already contained in the Creed.

‘Do you know the Creed, sir?’, Fr. Bertoni asked him. This unexpected question took him by surprise. Fr. Bertoni pressed the point and finally the man began to recite it. When he reached the mention of the dogma in question, Fr. Bertoni asked again: ‘Now, do you believe that?’

The man answered that he did. Fr. Bertoni replied that this was but the duty of every Christian. Then he explained the solid arguments for the credibility, what the theologians say about the manner, and left the man both astonished and instructed.

The Founder also had an exalted Hope, and he knew well how to inspire this virtue into the hearts of others. In the grave tribulations to which his beloved Congregation was subject, it can very well be said [29] of him that ***he hoped against hope***. He used to say: ‘Courage, my dear sons. Let us entrust ourselves to God. Let us leave it all up to Him, Who can do all things!’

There is an incident at the time that Fr. Louis Biadego was dying. The holy old man, Fr. Bertoni, came in to visit him: ‘Have courage, Fr. Louis, ***for if we live, we live unto the Lord; or if we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s...!*** [Rm 14:8]. The sick man took these words to heart, and he repeated them many times in the course of his illness. When he expired, it seemed that there was a smile on his face, that he had died full of hope.

His Charity, both toward God as well as for his neighbor, was most ardent. He used to say: ‘To love God, it is required that one’s hearty be full of God, and empty of all that which is not God, or is less than God.’ In truth, this is a description of the heart of Fr. Bertoni’s own heart. All those great and tireless endeavors which he accomplished for the glory of God, and the good of souls, were motivated from the principle of love.

A man had been condemned to death by the Italic Regime. He was by habit and profession, a Religious, but he had lived a godless and impious life. Many priests had tried to persuade him to do penance, but the man was adamant in rejecting their every suggestion. The case came to the attention of the Vicar of the Diocese, and he asked Fr. Bertoni to visit the unfortunate on the following day. Fr. Bertoni spent the great part of the night in prayer. Early in the morning, he offered the Host of Propitiation for the wretched man. Then, he went to him with a heart full of love. The unfortunate man who up until that time, had rejected everyone else, on seeing Fr. Bertoni, exclaimed: ‘Oh! this is the one, he is that blessed man whom God sends to me for my salvation!’. Exultant with joy, he was reconciled with God. The poor man asked pardon of everyone, and he died as a true penitent. This is but one of the many triumphs of the charity of Fr. Bertoni.

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Chapter 13 INDICATIONS OF HIS VIRTUES

In his soul, all the cardinal and moral virtues made a luminous and beautiful crown for his theological virtues. However, as we are writing only briefly about his life, we will just mention them in passing.

From the time that he was a young man, his Prudence was of a rare quality. When he was thirty years of age, as we have seen, he was appointed Confessor and the Spiritual Director of the Daughters of Charity, as his Prudence was so well known to his superiors. If he ever noted any defect against this virtue in any of his sons, he would apply an effective remedy for it. He often used to say to them: ‘My sons, be cautious in your speech. Do not trust solely in your own opinion.’

On one occasion, Fr. Bertoni had come in contact with a certain woman, who was pious enough in her own way, but was totally dependent on her own changing whims. She sought his counsel on the reading of spiritual books. ‘My dear Lady’, he interjected, ‘you only have to read the instructions for Philothea, in St. Francis de Sales. Read it, reread it and then read it again! It will be sufficient for you!’ With this, their interview ended.

In the matter of Justice, he was so delicate that he would not put off payment of even a small bill. One of the Brothers had bought some merchandise on credit, for a very small sum. When Fr. Gaspar came to know of it, he sent the Brother right back to pay the bill, even though to do this, the Brother had to go to the far end of the city.

Of his Temperance, it would suffice to recall the austerity of life that was lived at the Stimmate from their first coming to live there. He found an excellent opportunity to practice this austerity in accepting his infirmities. One time, when he was gravely ill, the Brother brought him a special meal. Fr. Bertoni, however, refused it, thanking the Brother, and then told him his reason: ‘For me, the common food is better.’

[31] Whenever others asked him why he treated his body so cruelly, he would answer: he would say that he loved with an ardent love that beautiful virtue, which on so many occasions had him compared with St. Bernard, St. Aloysius, or some holy priest, and most often, with the angels.

His great Fortitude of soul was evident in his endurance of his great fatigue and sustained efforts in the apostolate. It was certainly apparent in the agonizing sufferings of his many illnesses, as well as in the hateful insults of which he was sometimes the target. One day, he encountered someone who was very hostile toward him, and who hated him with a vengeance. This man could not tolerate in peace the great good that Fr. Gaspar was doing in the Oratories. Overflowing with his despicable venom, he hurled all of its fury against the meek priest. Fr. Bertoni struggled to overcome his own anger, and being completely overcome, he fell to the ground. Although his body had faltered, his spirit was victorious.

Another similar conquest is related about him, when a most rabid follower of Jansenism, who would not accept the war that Fr. Bertoni had declared against this proud sect, rushed up to him, near the Church of St. Firmus. This man unleashed the most villainous and disgusting invectives against him. Notwithstanding the fierce

struggle that he felt inside of him, Fr. Bertoni remained silent, endured it all and in the end, conquered the man's shouts with his own silence.

If Fortitude is *to encounter what is arduous, and to support what is difficult*, this virtue was indeed eminent in our Venerable Father. This virtue bore that involuntary poverty – out of love for which the Founder suffered willingly so many discomforts. It was this virtue that was also the mother of that Obedience by which he submitted himself in mind and heart to Fr. Marani, whom he had chosen as his Spiritual Director. Even more, it was the mother of that Humility that inspired his frequent challenge to his sons: *Lowly, lowly, if we wish God to raise us up!*

These, then, were the principal virtues that shone out the more in Fr. Bertoni as the end of his days drew closer. [32]

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Chapter 14 HIS LAST YEARS

His advanced age, and even more his fatigue and severe studies, as well as his frequent illnesses, had already placed a drain on his strength. He was able to leave his room but rarely, and then either by supporting himself, or by being carried in the arms of others. His spirit through it all, remained strong. In the confines of his room, he lived a life that was at one and the same time, both holy and productive. In the morning, he would always wake himself on time, from his already brief and interrupted sleep, and would give the first hour of his day to a profound meditation. Then, when his strength permitted, he would go to celebrate the august Sacrifice with angelic fervor. When he could no longer do this, he had one of his Priests celebrate it in the Oratory that adjoined his room. Totally absorbed in God, he would assist at these Masses from his bed, where he also received the Holy Eucharist every day. The Holy Mass with Communion was his only comfort that he had in these last years. He made a remark to this effect one day to one of his sons, who had asked him to permit that Mass be celebrated every holy day, down in the Church. He exclaimed: 'Do not deprive me, I beg of you, of this single consolation!'

After the Mass, he used to recite either alone, or with some of his companions, the Canonical Hours. Then, he dedicated himself to an active apostolate. When he could no longer go down for school, he used to call the young students into his room. There, seated near the table, or lying in pain on his bed, he would enthusiastically teach his class of Rhetoric.

He continued this, as long as the school was opened, that is, until 1844. At various intervals, he still preached from his bed to the more advanced and chosen members of the Oratory. Eye-witnesses tell us that it was beautiful to see him during these discourses so enthusiastic and so moving with his inspired words and animated look.

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In that room, and from that bed, he frequently **heard the Confessions** of the penitents that came to him. He also preached the **Spiritual Exercises to those Priests** who had sought him out as the guide of their souls. If one wanted to list the names of all those who came to **confer with him about their matters of conscience, it would be necessary to compile a volume that would be most edifying**. Our Venerable Father made himself all things to all men. It seemed as if he had no other purpose for living, except to do good to others: ***He was all things to all men!***

Sometimes, his humble room was honored by the visits of highly regarded personages who came in great numbers to have the opportunity to see and hear him. It should be recorded here that in the year 1831, on the solemn occasion of the commemoration of the finding of the body of Saint Zeno, Patron of the City and the Diocese of Verona, Fr. Gaspar was invited to give one of the three panegyrics. Although at this time, he was for the most part confined to his room, he did accept the invitation. He was carried up to the pulpit and there praised the sainted Bishop to the admiration of those who heard him. On the next day, the **Patriarch of Venice, and the Bishops of Vicenza, Padua and Mantua, with their Vicars and Secretaries**, came to see him. The venerable old man was again confined to bed because of his chronic infirmity. These illustrious visitors stayed with him for a number of hours, **discussing various theological matters, in dogma, moral, canon law**, asking for his views. When they left, each and everyone were full of admiration for him, and most edified.

From his sermon to be printed later, the Bishop had to intervene, to overcome his unwillingness. When the order came to him in writing from the Bishop's Secretary, Fr. Peter Vignola, who is at present our beloved Superior General, Fr. Bertoni broke down into tears.

While Fr. Bertoni occupied himself with such zeal for the good of others, he also gave much thought concerning what he should do for his own beloved Congregation. Thanks to God, he had seen this [34] grow and become stronger. He always directed it, both as regards its personnel, and its material endowments. He had made many provisions for it, and all with a tender love and singular prudence. Order, peace, virtue and the Spirit of the Lord had always reigned in it, and the good order of Christ was evident throughout its members and its apostolate.

The Venerable Founder from his room and bed of pain, at the request of his sons, compiled a body of most wise Constitutions. These were the fruit of long prayer, much study and his varied experiences.

This, then, was the life, and these were the occupations of Fr. Gaspar during his last years. We can very well say that if his flesh was indeed weak, his spirit was still willing and vigorous, and it remained so until the end.

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Chapter 15 HIS LAST ILLNESS

Gold is proven in fire, the wise man has said, ***and the just man on the crucible of tribulation***. Fr. Bertoni was proven time and time again, principally through his many and varied illnesses, during which his patience was truly exemplary.

During the year 1813, his health was severely damaged by an illness that brought him close to death and he received the Last Sacraments for the first time. It seems that he had contracted the disease because of his extraordinary work, as well as the discomforts he endured going from Cantarene to St. Joseph's Convent to assist the Canossian Sisters. He gave very little time, either day or night, to rest, whenever his services were needed. The many prayers that were said for him at this time were heard, and he recovered. It was not, however, a complete victory, as he continued to feel discomfort throughout his body, and most especially in his right leg.

After he had been at the Stimmate for four or five years, the infection had become so serious that his life was feared for more than it had been previously. His leg swelled and a tumor appeared on his shin. It was ugly in appearance, and resisted every remedy, and continued to spread. After consultation, the services of a renowned surgeon were judged necessary.

It is not easy to describe the painful operations that he endured during this period. It is only the truth to state that he underwent more than 200 of them, and that each one was extremely painful. There was one in particular, when the doctors lanced his leg above the heel. Following this, setons were inserted. Then, there were continuous probing, and also lancing that were necessary. These were followed by the application of medication that burned his sensitive flesh, and these two were without number. The patience of the Founder led him to be compared to Job. He gave no indication of the pain that he endured. He was never ill-humored, nor did he ever complain. He manifested only a serenity, and even a joviality, that he was considered to be a saint.

Despite all this, instead of disappearing, his leg became worse; at the end of 1842, all hope was again given up for his cure. Public and private prayers were offered, especially to the *Madonna del Popolo*. On the first day of the new year, he seemed much better and in a short time, he recovered almost perfectly the use of his leg. I said 'almost perfectly' because his weakness was such that he could not get about except on crutches, or with a cane. There was still pain, more or less acute, that bothered him from time to time. So, God willed it that he might be to everyone in the House and outside it, a continual example of patience. He would often be heard to say; 'Pray, please pray, that the Lord might grant me patience, as I feel a great need of it!'

He would often say the word: *Fiat!* - and this seemed to come from the very depths of his heart. Sometimes he said: 'Bear down with your hand, O Lord, as you have every reason to do so!' to those who came to visit him, he would say: 'Well, here I am, a lazy man – a real loafer!' Through it all, he gave much edification.

This was his life from 1842 until 1850. In this latter year, such was his exhaustion, that he was no longer able to get out of his bed. For more than 30 months, he had to lie completely still on his left side. Whenever the others came to move him, even a little, this [36] always caused him excruciating pain. On these occasions, his patience was no less evident, and the only words that he uttered once in a while, were the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, as a most pitiable lament. Those of his sons who came especially during the night to administer to him, or to see if he needed anything, would only hear: 'Sleep, my dear sons, go back to sleep!' If he did need anything, it would always be prefaced with such expressions as: 'Could you do me this favor? ... Would you please...? I am sorry to trouble you...!

His discomfort defies description when, he had to remain motionless in the same spot, his back was lacerated by an ulcerous and bloody bed sore. Were it not for the fact that the Brother Infirmarian noticed it, and told the doctor about it, no one would have ever known of this manifestation of the heroic patience of the Servant of God.

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Chapter 16 HIS HOLY DEATH

God had tried his Servant and was pleased with him – He, therefore, had to crown him. It was during the last days of May in 1853 – Fr. Gaspar was very low, but still neglected none of his usual practices of piety. He was much like a wayfarer, who quickens his place as he sees his home-land in the distance. He manifested for his true native-land an increased fervor. He prayed and meditated day and night, and he invoked Jesus and Marty much more frequently. He had the rosary in his hands almost continuously.

During those days, he confided to an assisting Brother how the Meditation on the *Hail Mary* was enough to keep him occupied for hours on end, and even for the entire night. It is believed that this tender Mother comforted with some form of a vision, because every once in a while he would ask the Brother who had heard him awake: 'Did you hear anything? Did you see anything? When the Brother answered that he had not, Fr. Gaspar would say: 'it's all right, then, go back to sleep!'

The 12th of June arrived, which was to be the last day of his precious life. As usual, he wanted to receive Holy Communion, and no one thought the time had come for him to receive It as Viaticum. He wanted to receive It out of devotion, and as was his custom [37], he was still fasting. Very soon, however, ominous signs appeared. His breathing became labored, and he seemed to be sleeping. Right after

noon, he seemed to enter a coma. With the use of smelling salts, however, he was revived somewhat, but it was now clear that the end was near. While he still had the use of his faculties, he confessed his sins one more time. He was then asked if he was most willing and happy to be anointed. At this most welcome suggestion, he offered his hands and feet for the Sacrament.

After It had been administered, he went into his last agony. He was comforted by the Indulgence and Papal Blessing, *in the instant [articolo] of death*. His Spiritual Father, Fr. Marani, recited the prayers for the dying. Suddenly, with tears in his eyes, he turned to his Confrere, Fr. Brugnoli, and exclaimed: 'See – our Fr. Gaspar is no more!' His blessed soul had so quietly taken flight to its eternal repose, without giving any indication even to the Priest praying over him, or to the others in the room.

It was 3:30 in the afternoon of that 12th day of June, 1853. Fr. Gaspar was 75 years, 8 months and three days old. At this hour in the afternoon, four of his priests were **preaching the Word of God in the schools of Christian Doctrine**. It seemed that God wanted to show by this how pleased he was with the work undertaken by the Venerable Fr. Bertoni, by calling him precisely at the hour of these classes, to his reward in heaven.

His death, then, was precious in the sight of the Lord, as is the death of the saints: ***Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!***

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Chapter 17 LAST TRIBUTE, AND THE CONCEPT OF HIS HOLINESS

Humility precedes glory. And ***he whom humbles himself shall be exalted***. This divine statement was singularly verified in our Founder [38] immediately following his death. At the sad announcement, of his passing, there was universal sorrow throughout the city. There was one statement on the lips of all: 'A Saint has died!' There was on that day, and on the day following, a general outpouring of people from all walks of life, flocking to the Stimate, to see and to kiss the body. Many also wanted to take something away with them that had belonged to him, as a beloved remembrance or relic. Arrangements were made to meet these requests. Among the mourners, was Fr. Viscardini, who took a few of Fr. Bertoni's hairs. There was a request that a portrait be made of him, and so a death mask was taken. This petition had been made many times during his life-time, but the humble Fr. Bertoni would not sit for any portrait.

The veneration in which he was held was even more manifest in the tribute paid to him at his funeral. It was held on June 13th, a day dedicated to the wonder-worker, St. Anthony of Padua, for whom there was great devotion in Verona. The funeral took place in the late afternoon, following the solemn procession in honor of

the Saint, It is no exaggeration to state the two processions compared very favorably to one another in both size and devotion.

For the funeral procession, there was a spontaneous outpouring of Priests, Seminarians, the College of Acolytes, the Confraternities and the Marian Oratories. A number of well-to-do families sent their servants with torches. The throng of people formed two lines from the Parish Church to that of the Stimate. It was not curiosity that moved them, but the sincere grief over their loss, and their profound veneration for the deceased, which were evident in every face. Tears and prayers were the tribute for him, as though he were a saint.

When the services came to a close, the learned and pious Arch-Priest, Pastor of the most Holy Trinity, Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe, delivered a moving and elegant eulogy, testifying to his affection for Fr. Bertoni. In concluding, he exclaimed: 'Hail, blessed soul of my beloved Father! Hail! Pray for me, pray for all these, your beloved sons [here he referred to Fr. Bertoni's Congregation], pray for us all, that there might be alive in our souls that love for those virtues, of which in your life, you gave all of us so brilliant an example and instruction.'

It was the thought and desire of all that his venerated body would not be buried in the common area of the local cemetery. What would be [39] more just and fitting was that even in death, he should remain in that place where he had given such wonderful example, namely, there in his Church, in the midst of his sons? Therefore, a petition was sent to the proper authorities, but before permission was obtained, more than a year had passed.

Finally, on July 30, 1854, the venerated body was taken from the place where it had been laid in the Parish Church. It was transported back to the Stimate, and there, after the usual services were celebrated, and his burial place had been blessed, he was laid to rest in the center of the Church.

On this occasion, too, the above-mentioned Arch-Priest delivered a magnificent eulogy in his honor. It began with the words of Psalm 40, ***O Lord, the hymn shall please You in Sion, and the promise shall be rendered to You in Jerusalem.*** Fr. Giacobbe continued: 'Pour out on this eloquent stone not tears, nor laments, nor flowers – but, the affections of holy joy. Can I not hope that God, Who wishes to be glorified in His saints, might deign to derive therefrom, the waters of salvation?'

Throughout his eulogy, Fr. Giacobbe recalled the words, the virtues and the holiness of Fr. Bertoni. He concluded: 'Hail, one more time, o great and holy soul of my, and your Fr. Gaspar! Ask in our behalf, and fill my spirit with yours – obtain it for the clergy of Verona. You will be blessed, Verona, if your priesthood is animated with the love of the divine sciences, with the practice of the virtues that may be learned from this holy and learned example!' These words should have special meaning to us, the sons of such a Father.

During the following November, other honors and solemn suffrages were celebrated by our Fathers. The ceremony was attended by a large number of Veronese clergy and laity. Fr. Cesar Camillus Bresciani delivered an inspiring eulogy on this occasion. After referring to Fr. Bertoni as his beloved Guide, his dear friend, and his most thoughtful fellow citizen, he concluded with these words: 'Who can ever give expression to the gratitude and love that I still feel for you? My hope leads me to look out over this assembly [40], and throughout our Province, and say confidently: Oh! My God! Thrice blessed, grant that this oration of mine may be at least one stone on that altar that I hope Verona will one day see rising in honor of my holy fellow citizen!' ¹³

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¹³ This entire *Compendium* is based on the elegant *Biography* of Fr. Gaspar written by the above-mentioned Arch-Priest, Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe.

PART TWO

Necrologies of the Members of the Early Community

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Compendium of the Life of the Coadjutor Brother **ANGELO CASELLA**

[41]

He was the good and pious son of Joseph Casella and Antonia Monedgon, of Monfumo, in the Diocese of Treviso. At the age of 29, he entered the Stimate to serve God in the simplicity of his heart. He was to spend there only eighteen months, and then passed on to the other life, on the 3rd of April, 1835. He had been sick only a few days and had received the Last Sacraments. He had an extraordinary piety and religious spirit. As is recorded in the writings of Fr. Gramego and Fr. Cainer, he was truly an 'angel', nor only in name, but also in fact. He was the first of our Congregation who was called to heaven.

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Compendium Of the Life of **Fr. LOUIS BIADEGO**

'On the 12th day of February 1841', writes Fr. Gramego in his brief Chronicles, 'my most beloved Fr. Louis Biadego died in the embrace of the Lord, saying the holy names of Jesus and Mary with his last breath. He was only 34 years of age, but he was full of days, whose memory is held in benediction. He left us all edified with his holy life, as well as with his equally holy death.'

He was the son of Cajean Biadego and Matilda Ruzzenenti of Verona, who were most upright parents. They brought **[42]** him up impiety and the fear of the Lord. As a young boy, he felt the call to the priesthood, and to leave the world behind. He felt drawn to live in the poor retreat at the Stimate, by the good odor of the virtues of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni and his companions.

When his studies had been completed, and he had been ordained a Priest, he attended only to loving the Lord and having Him loved by others. He taught the elementary classes, and being serious by nature, he kept his students docile and attentive. While he was reading or explaining his classes, he would take every occasion to instill into their young hearts the Fear of God, affection for virtue, and most especially, devotion toward St. Joseph, to whom he was most dedicated. During the early days of February, he used to begin to remind them: 'My dear students, let us prepare ourselves for the beautiful month of St. Joseph! 'When March arrived, it is

impossible to relate how original he was in having this good Saint honored by the young boys. He would suggest to them aspirations and ejaculations, and would tell stories about the Saint.

He was also very devoted to the Mother of God, and he would often be seen around the House with the Rosary in his hand. His love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was most tender. He visited Him as often as he could, and whenever he had to go from one part of the House to the other, he always took the way that went by the Choir of the Church. This afforded him the occasion to greet Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Before the altar where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, he would make a slow and profound genuflection, with such sincerity that he seemed truly like a young man in love.

In the afternoon, when school was over, he used to go to the Church to spend that time with the Lord. When he was surrounded by the young students, he would recite the Rosary with them. This would then be repeated when other groups were with him.

What more can we say? He used to make a Novena to all the Saints of the calendar. On being asked how he managed this, he replied that he would say a *Gloria* in honor of each of them. To his prayer, he added mortification. Not even considering the fact that the table in those times was already so poor and austere, as to emulate that of the Certosini and the Trappists. Fr. Louis abhorred any comfort.

While he was assisting Fr. Bertoni during his long illnesses, Fr. Louis used to make his meditation in the morning kneeling in his room, without any support. We do not know if there were any stoves, or fire-places in use during the winter at that time at the Stimmate. Fr. Biadego would pass long hours, almost motionless in that very cold room, near his Father and Founder, whom he revered.

One winter, the wardrobe keeper had forgotten to give him a woolen blanket. Fr. Biadego never asked for one, and supported this as a privation. Later, when the oversight was discovered, he was asked how he had been able to endure the cold. His reply was such that it seemed that he had hardly noticed it.

In the matter of obedience, he was all that our rule demands. He truly emulated the Angels; *rivaling on earth the heavenly spirits...* On hearing the Venerable Founder say: 'Please do me this favor...', he would immediately set himself to the task. Sometimes Fr. Bertoni would have to stop him, saying: 'Wait a minute! Wait till I tell you what I want!'

Fr. Biadego perfectly fits the description that St. Bernard gives of obedience: 'He prepares his feet for the journey, his ears for hearing, his hands for work, and he keeps his whole being in readiness that he might carry out the will of the one commanding.'

We will recall this incident: in Cittadella, before the present theater was built, there was another one that was open during the day, and also every night. This was a cause of concern to Fr. Louis. He prayed to St. Alphonsus that the Lord might intervene for the destruction of that theater. His hopes did not go unrewarded, and finally the theater was torn down. He rejoiced over the fact, and thanked God for it

Other characteristics of this good Servant of God should be recalled. However, may this little that has been said about him be a proper tribute, merited by a just man after his death. May these few words also encourage those who come afterwards to imitate his example.

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**Compendium
of the Life of the
Cleric, Louis Ferrari**

On July 24, 1834, as a young boy who had not yet reached his fourteenth birthday, Louis Ferrari, was accepted at the Stimate by the Venerable Father Gaspar Bertoni. The Founder had known this boy, and had for him a great affection, because of his fine intelligence, and his singular innocence.

‘What will become of this little dove?’- Fr. Gramego wrote in his Chronicle shortly after Ferrari’s entrance. Indeed, he was a boy of delicate health, who in the flower of his youth had embraced a manner of life that was equally as austere as that of our first Confreres. He did cause some wonder, but showed that his courage for virtue was not ordinary.

He remained in his secular garb for only six months. On the 18th day of December ((should this be January???) 1835, the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, he was vested by the Pro-Vicar of the Diocese, Monsignor Louis Castori. The ceremony took place in the Church of the Stimate at 4:30 p.m. The Church was filled with people, and especially with students.

He completed his grammar course, and that of Rhetoric at the Stimate with much profit, showing promise in Latin. He was able to produce elegant compositions in this language. For Philosophy and Theology, he was sent to the Diocesan Seminary, because at this time, the faculty to teach the entire course of studies at the Stimate had not been granted. This faculty was given at a later date by the Illustrious and Most Reverend Bishop Benedict DeRiccabona.

‘Don Luigetto’, as they used to call him, attended class with his companion, John Baptist Lenotti. This latter lived among us as a **Missionary** endowed with a great religious spirit, and was the second Superior General ¹⁴.

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In the Seminary class rooms, our students stood out to such a degree that they were often proposed by their professors as models for the other students. On very rare exceptions, they were even dispensed from examinations. They never went off to school alone, but were always accompanied by some of their Confreres, as the Venerable Founder wished. Furthermore, before they left for school, they would have to recite their lessons at home, and many times, Fr. Bertoni himself would hear them. Every day they were expected to pre-read whatever tract the Professor was to expose and explain on the following day.

In addition to these assigned studies, they had to apply themselves to other subjects with utmost diligence. These were matters that Fr. Bertoni assigned to them for that time that would remain free after completing their regular work. Every day, they were expected to give a quarter of an hour to Greek – there was another period of 15 minutes to be devoted to French and Hebrew. Then they had to give an equal length of time to Latin, and the Tuscan classics, according to the method of Cesari ¹⁵.

This curriculum lasted for the entire course of their Philosophy. When Don Ferrari and Don Lenotti began their theological studies, there were additional assignments to the exegesis that they studied at the Seminary. They had to read sacred Scripture and give their explanations of the passages read to Fr. Bertoni. In the early times, it was just the text itself, but later, they also were expected to know the views of the various commentators.

For the study of the sacred canons, they used Devoti’s Commentary at home. For outside reading in theology, they studied Antoine, Petavius and St. Alphonsus Liguori. Fr. Bertoni wanted his students well versed in letters, but even more so in all the sacred sciences, because to him, knowledge is the secret weapon of the Priest. Don Luigi, whose brief memoirs we wish to bring to a close, always obeyed Fr. Bertoni with good will. His ardor for study did not diminish, despite the *scrofula* that soon developed in his blood stream.

¹⁴ He had received the clerical habit the year before, on May 8, 1834, 15 days after his entrance. The first student to be accepted at the Stimate was Charles Fedelini, who entered on October 4, 1826. The Vicar of the Diocese, Msgr. Dionisi, vested him that same year

¹⁵ The method of Fr. Anthony Cesari consisted in this: read a few lines of Tullius, or from Passavanti, or from some other authors of that century, and consider them attentively. Then, having closed the book, write all that can be remembered. Then, compare what has been written to the text, and note all the differences and mistakes. Impress their beautiful expressions and the most pure gold of their language and style, on your mind. This type of exercise was a favorite with Fr. Bertoni. If he had to dispense with any other assignment, he would never neglect this one.

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Deep incisions were soon made, especially on his shoulders. There were times that the surgeon had to cut right down to the bone. Through all this, young Ferrari remained patient, and never complained. Medicated and bandaged, he went of to school as usual. With all the suffering that he endured, he was nonetheless always joyful. With his innocent witticisms, he was the life of the community.

Fr. Bertoni, who loved this young man a great deal, did everything possible to restore his health, without sparing any cost, but it was all to no avail. The stubborn illness finally overcame his waning struggle, and he died at the age of 22.

Even during his last illness, ‘Don Luigetto’ retained his angelic modesty and his ever present smile never disappeared from his face. ‘One night’, the Brother who assisted him related, ‘I brought him something which I thought would be some comfort to him. He looked at me smiling, and said; ‘Why do you bother about these things? I am not thinking of this world any more, but I am thinking of paradise.’

When Fr. Bertoni used to visit him, he would comfort the young man with words such as these: ‘Courage, Don Luigetto! ***If we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die in the Lord. Therefore, whether we live, or die, we are the Lord’s!***

Young Ferrari showed a great desire to die, to be united with God. As Fr. Biadego was in the next room and was also seriously ill, they used to joke back and forth. They would ask one another who would be the first to die. Fr. Biadego did die first, bringing to a close his holy and religious life. A few days later, young Ferrari followed him. He passed away on the 6th of March, 1842. All were consoled in his holy death¹⁶.

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**Compendium
of the Life of
Fr. MODESTO CAINER**

He was born to Peter Cainer and Mary Mistrorgio, very pious parents, who lived in Pescheria, between Sottoriva and Via Storione. The Cainer family was of civil station. He entered the Stimmate on July 12, 1824, to lead a mortified and humble life with our Venerable Founder. Fr. Cainer, at this time, was 25 years of age, and he had already been ordained a Priest. He was not a man of extensive learning, but

¹⁶ On July 30, 1853, his remains, together with those of the others of our deceased who did not have noble burial, were transported from the public cemetery to the Sepulcher of the Congregation which had been purchased by Fr. John Mary Marani, the first Superior General after the Founder [who had died the month before, on the 12th of June of that same year, 1853].

one of great humility. He showed dependence on Fr. Bertoni in all things, with his simplicity of a child. He enjoyed being employed in the most ordinary duties.

It was because of this low esteem of himself, and not to avoid fatigue, that he never wanted to accept the office of Teacher, nor Confessor. The Founder, therefore, did not ask these of him, but would have him substitute for a teacher who might be impeded from teaching school on any given day. He was a man who showed himself always disposed to accept any inconvenience, no matter what the cost would be to himself personally.

Fr. Michael Angelo Gramego described him thus in his Chronicles: 'Under the direction of the Servant of God, Reverend Father Gaspar Bertoni, Fr. Cainer trudged to libraries, book stores and dealers, he wrote to, and he also searched through, distant cities. His was the merit of assembling a very good and valuable **library** at the Stimate. He was a very patient, charitable, loving and diligent man in assisting all the sick of the House, especially the young Cleric, Don Ferrari, to whom he rendered an assistance which I will call heroic, throughout his very long and most dreaded infirmity.'

He held the office of Sacristan and he discharged it with much devotion. He often did the work of the Brother Sacristan, and would sweep the Church and trim the lamps. He was convinced that no duty in the House of God is lowly, but all are very honorable.

To serve the Masses, he chose only those boys who knew the ceremonies exactly, and who would pronounce **[48]** the words distinctly. He himself would instruct them with his patient goodness.

He also had the duty of supervising the students on their leaving the House. Then, when school was over for the day, he would appear on the street with his cloak and hat, putting on his glasses, and watch for the boys streaming out of the exits, leading to the street. They then would walk along in order, and well behaved.

He did all that he could to make himself useful to the young community, for which he felt a most sincere affection. Before the Lord called him to Himself, He tried his servant 'with four long and painful illnesses, which he supported with great patience.' He died with all the Sacraments, praying continually until his last breath. He passed away on January 12, 1844, when he was 45 years of age.

Fr. Francis **Ravelli**¹⁷, SJ, wrote from Rome to a cousin of his, on April 27, 1844, concerning the death of Fr. Modesto: 'I heard about the happy death of Fr. Cainer. What a beautiful and holy soul he was! He was really an angel. *Being consumed in a short time, he fulfilled a long life.* Only with difficulty have I said a **De Profundis** for him, and this seemed to me to be out of order. Many times, however, and with fervor, have I recommended myself to him, who is now blessed in heaven.'

¹⁷ Translator's Note: This is the maiden name of Fr. Bertoni's Mother: Brunora [RAVELLI].

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**Compendium
Of the Life of
Fr. FRANCIS CARTOLARI**

At his death, Fr. Francis Cartolari left behind an odor of virtue and holiness that there would be required – as Fr. Gramego wrote – ‘a volume to describe them.’ However, the little that has come down to us concerning him suffices, I believe, to justify the sublime idea that those who have gone before us felt for Fr. Cartolari.

[49]

Francis Cartolari was born of a very noble family of Verona¹⁸. His father was Sir Paul Cartolari, a man of long-standing faith, of an irreproachable way of life and unusual modesty. Francis’s mother was the noble Frances Borghetti, the last of that illustrious lineage. She was a woman endowed with an unusual mind, of strong soul and extraordinary piety and charity. These gifts she also bequeathed to our Fr. Francis, and most especially, his deep sense of religion. This was so strong in him, that he had a veritable horror of the slightest fault.

When his studies were completed, and he had been ordained a Priest, he entered the Stimmate in the year 1822. At that time, he was 28 years of age. Soon he gave evidence at the Stimmate of how well he had grasped the words of Jesus Christ: ***Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*** [Mt 5:3]. Humility and poverty formed his genuine delight. For him, the greatest humiliations and those contrary to his self-love, seemed to him as nourishment. He sought them, as men of the world seek honor. If anyone reprimanded him, or even in passing had referred to some defect of his, this he seemed to accept happily and

¹⁸ His family descended from the Aliprandini’s of Milan, a branch of the Fanzago family. They all moved to Clusone, then to Bergamo, and finally to Verona. The family became established in Verona and received the Decree of Citizenship on April 23, 1445. In 1468, the Family took the name of Cartolari, which was then inscribed in its Coat of Arms. This came about through the heredity of the Canon and Palatine Count, Bartholomew Cartolari, the last of his clan, and the uncle of Anthony – who was the son of the late Andrew Fanzago. This Anthony is buried in the Cathedral before the altar of Sts. Stephen and Lawrence, which is now dedicated to the Assumption.

The above-mentioned Canon was the Vicar General of several Bishops of Verona. He founded and adorned the Chapels of St. Michael, the Arch-Angel, and the one of Sts. Lawrence and Stephen in the Cathedral. The Cartolari Family was inscribed in the Noble Council in 1524. Its descendants were exemplary Churchmen, learned juris-consultors, and valiant knights. They held the most honorable positions within the country, as well as outside of it.

Among the outstanding, was Bartholomew Cartolari, a distinguished jurist, Vicar of Cardinal Augustine Valerio, Coouncilor of Rancussion, the Farnesan Duke of Parma and Piacenza, etc., and the Bishop of Chioggia. Paul Cartolari, his brother, was a professed Knight of the Order of St. Stephen, and no less a fervent Christian, as he was a courageous warrior. After having fought with great praise in many lands especially Flanders, he went to Hungary for the war against the Turk, and he died in the battle at Giavarino [Raab?], defending a bulwark to which he had been assigned by John DeMedici, on August 28, 1594.

contentedly. He would be the first to undertake the most ordinary and lowly tasks, especially in serving the sick, for whom [50] he showed a most affectionate care. He would never let anyone interfere with his serving them. While the building was in progress, he was often seen carrying stones, or transporting the needed mortar in a wheel-barrow.

One duty he reserved for himself was that of instructing the most needy people and children. 'This', he used to say, 'is my bread and butter!'

He was always content with the most common and ordinary food. I will say that this in him gave much edification. At dinner, or at supper, while eating the little that had been placed before it, he seemed to enjoy it with relish. Often, he would humbly and sincerely thank Fr. Bertoni for what had been provided. He used to say: 'If he did not provide me with these things, I would have been without anything to eat!'

Out of love for Christ, he had no concern whatever for the nobility and riches of his family. He was deeply rooted in religious humility. To make him feel at ease, or to make him blush, all that was necessary was to recall that in the world he had been a Count and a very rich man. It is impossible to describe how much he loved to be corrected in private, or even in public. He would thank superiors for it, as if a present had been given to him.

He nourished a tender love for poverty as well. He would not touch, or dispose of anything, without having first obtained permission, which he would ask, even for the most inconsequential needs. He would set aside for himself those things that were the most worn, and the most patched. It would be a most difficult matter for him to accept new things. It was evident that this man was endowed with every virtue – he was the perfect religious. He died full of merits, leaving his substantial holdings in his will to Fr. Bertoni. The Founder, over-coming his love for his son, by an act of heroic denial, renounced all of it in favor of a brother of the deceased¹⁹.

¹⁹ Count Anthony Cartolari wished to leave for posterity a perpetual memorial of this heroic detachment of Fr. Bertoni and his sons. He had a slab erected in his country Oratory of Berthachina, which records this fact. It was to this Oratory that Fr. Francis Cartolari, all his priestly life, used to go to hear Confessions, and on Sundays, he would celebrate Mass there, and give a short sermon. The inscription was composed by the celebrated epigraphist, Fr. J. Baptist Santi. It would seem useful to quote here the inscription in its entirety:

IN THE SANCTUARY OF BERTACHINA, GASPAR BERTONI, MICHAEL ANGELO GRAMEGO, CAJETAN BRUGNOLI AND FRANCIS BENCIOLINI, PRIESTS, BY THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT WRITTEN ON THE 13TH OF MAY, 1845, BY FRANCIS CARTOLARI, A MOST PIOUS PRIEST, ON THE 5TH OF JULY, IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH, MOVED BY THEIR MAGNANIMITY OF SOUL, WILLED THAT THE ENTIRE SUBSTANCE OF THIS ESTATE SHOULD PERTAIN TO HIS BROTHER, ANTHONY CARTOLARI. HE, ADMIRING SUCH VIRTUE, WILLED THAT THE MEMORY OF THIS.

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Compendium
of the Life of
Fr. MICHAEL ANGELO GRAMEGO

We do know that Fr. Gramego was a gentle soul, and that he was the 'delight' of the nascent Congregation. However, it is a pity that all too few of the reminiscences concerning him have come down to us.

He was born in Verona in the year 1783. He was the son of Sebastian Gramego, and Florina Solesina – 'a simple, pure and holy woman', as he described her. She died at the age of 82.

Three qualities of his Mother were also revealed in the temperament and training of her son, who was to become a Priest. He was a man full of faith, humility and that serene joyfulness. More and more, with the passing of time, such characteristics, together with an active faith, are disappearing.

[52]

A month after Fr. Bertoni entered the Stimmate, with Fr. Marani, Fr. Gramego offered himself as the second Priest companion. He always professed for Fr. Bertoni the most profound veneration, and a most sincere filial attachment. He loved the little Congregation with a passion, and he did not draw a single breath except in its service. It would not be enough to reach the Chronicle that he wrote, and which was continued up until the year 1847, to be convinced of this²⁰.

SINGULAR EXAMPLE, WITH GRATEFUL SOUL, BE CONSIGNED TO
POSTERITY. IN THE YEAR 1847.

²⁰ I believe it would be useful to note here some of the entries from his Chronicle:

1818. Note well, and I mean well, and indeed, very well! Around the first of April, a contract was drawn up for the construction of the main altar. What a happy day!

1822: Note this, even more than well. O Holy Spouses, Joseph and Mary! The blessed and desired hour has come. Today, October 3rd, at 3:00 p.m., the main Church was opened for public worship. I, a miserable sinner, was the first to celebrate on the new main altar, dedicated to the Holy Spouses. ...Watch out, Gramego, if you do not do well!

'Today I have I have come [says Jesus Christ] to dwell night and day with you.' Watch out, if ...!

1833. The 3rd of October. A note, one of the beautiful notes, indeed the most beautiful. At First Vespers [i.e., at 3:00 p.m.] of St. Francis of Assisi, we rang for the first time the excellent concert of 6 bells, in the tone of 'Alafa', composed of the finest metals – resettled copper, all with soldini's of San Marco, and purified before my very eyes, and cast likewise in my presence, without my ever leaving the furnace room, although this firing lasted about 11 hours. Viva! Jesus and Mary! The cost if the three metals, the timber for the belfry, and their mounting and iron fittings,

With his tender charity, and with that good sense of humor of his, he was a consolation to those of the House, as well as to those outside it. His serenity of soul never was ruffled. If some tribulation or humiliation come to him, after he had complied with the Will of God, he would turn to his companions and say: 'This does not bother me; there is not one Gramego in the world!'

At table in those times, the whole main course, after a little soup seasoned with fat, there would frequently be a pieced of cheese, about the size and the shape of dice. Fr. Gramego used to shake it in the hollow of his hand, as if he were playing dice, and roll it across the table, saying: '... two... six...! He would thereby sprinkle that poor table with the condiment of his own, innocent good humor.

He returned one day from our Villa in Sezano, and Fr. Bertoni asked **[53]** him if he and his companions had tasted any wine. He answered: 'We drank well through a double key ... when we arrived at the fountain, we drank water through this gadget...' In saying this, he showed to Fr. Bertoni what he had in his hand. This was only an example of the mortification that he practiced. Even more, it indicates his heroic self-denial that he practiced with a smile.

For many years, he taught the elementary classes, and won the reputation of being a 'good master.'

Penitents flocked to his **Confessional**, and especially the poor, for whom he felt a genuine paternal pity. For many of them, he obtained considerable alms from persons who were well off financially. It was not rare that he provided bedding for them, to better provide for the morality of their young. Many times, after remaining in his Confessional for the entire morning, it happened that just as he had taken his place at table for a mouthful of food, the Brother would come and say: 'Father, there are some more who are asking for you.' He would then return to his Confessional.

There were times when this seemed to disturb him, he would say: 'What? At this hour?' He would then take back what he had said, and would add: 'All right, all right – I am coming right away', and he would get up from table. The others would say that he left the table not to bury the dead, as had Tobias, but to impart that Sacrament that raises souls up to a divine life.

Although there was a large field opened up to him in the Confessional, he could do little, or nothing in the pulpit.

His dread of public speaking seemed to take even his breath away. Almost every time that the Founder had sent him to teach Catechism in the parish of the Most Holy Trinity, as he went along the street, his excessive anxiety even caused

construction, etc. was 1050 tallari [5,250 Lira]. *For him who fears God, there is nothing to fear.*

him to vomit, or faint. Fr. Bertoni was satisfied with his willingness to obey, so did not impose so difficult a trial on him any more.

Fr. Gramego's life, therefore, revolved around his Confessional and class room. His was a life, totally dedicated and was one of sacrifice. He lived 70 years, 37 of which were in our Congregation.

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**Compendium
of the Life of the Coadjutor Brother,
JOHN BAPTIST BANDORIA**

Your life is hidden with Christ in God - St. Paul says to the Colossians [3:3]. If these words of the Apostle apply to all genuine Christians, they were truly verified in the life of John Baptist Bandoria. He was born in Verona, the son of Paul Bandoria and Cecilia Cerasola. In the short time that he lived, he knew little of the world, and nothing of that pleased him. Overwhelmed by domestic tribulations, his heart was opened only for the love of God and his own Mother. He assisted her with most affectionate care, throughout her long illness. He worked hard at his trade of tailoring, to support her and to procure for her every possible comfort. He accompanied her to Mass, leading her on his arm and home again from Church. He was always nearby, rendering her every service that he could. His filial piety was so evident that it deeply loved those who came to know of it. It drew down on him the blessing of the Lord, Who set aside this beautiful soul to make it all His own.

For a long time, John Bandoria had desired to come to the Stimate. After his mother's death, he was the only surviving child in the family and he finally realized his wish on March 18, 1846. At the Stimate, he continued to ply his trade while serving our old Fathers, and also offering himself for any other service that was asked of him in obedience. He had a calm nature, and loved silence, prayer and work. He had a great desire to hear the Word of God.

Seven years after his entrance, he was judged ready for heaven and departed this life on July 3, 1853 ((September 6th?)).

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**Compendium
of the Life of the Professed Student,
FELICE FORTUNATO MARINI**

In Voltino, on the Lago di Garda, the Diocese of Brescia, Felice Fortunato Marini was born. He was the son of Anthony Marini and Ursula Pasquetti. On December 13, 1856 at the age of 19, he was accepted at the Stimate. For a number of years, he had been in the well-known Congregation, founded by Fr. Mazza, but was rejected because of ill health. Fr. Marani also later rejected him for

the same reason, but was finally accepted on the receipt of the favorable judgment of four doctors. It is evident that his malady instead of disappearing, had merely abated.

Hence, before the end of his Novitiate, it was clear that his end was near. He received Holy Communion as Viaticum, and was granted permission to pronounce his Holy Vows, into the hands of Fr. Francis Benciolini, who had been delegated for this by the Superior. He made his Profession with such devoted candor, that he edified all that witnessed it. With the same presence of mind, he received the Last Sacraments. Then, he laid back to pray and from time, he could be heard expressing the wish that he would soon go to heaven. He expired on October 18, 1858.

He was a Youngman with much intelligence, and who applied much diligence to his studies. He wrote Latin in the style of Cornelius, and could speak the French language very well. He was most exact in the observance of every rule, and was devoted, humble, mortified and obedient. He gave great hopes to the Congregation that in him it was to have a good and worthy worker – instead, it was to have one more intercessor in heaven!

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[56]

**Compendium
of the Life of
Fr. CAJETAN BRUGNOLI**

He was born in Verona of an honorable family, in the year 1790. His Father, Charles, was a Notary by profession, and his Mother was Rose Cassari. By temperament, he was full of life and zeal. Under Napoleon, he served as a Captain in the Corps of Engineers.

He was tall in stature, and of noble appearance, and served for a time in the Noble Guard of Napoleo. While his Corps left for Milan, he obtained permission to go to Modena, where he took further studies in the school of military engineering. In accord with the will of God, Who wanted him for His service, a short time later, he found himself in poor health. He applied for, and received a discharge from military service. He then returned to Verona, and entered the Seminary. When he had completed his theological studies, he dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the good of souls. He worked very hard to establish and to direct the Oratory in St. Anastasia's Parish.

Because of his desire to serve the Lord better, one year after our Venerable Founder had entered the Stimmat, Fr. Brugnoli also entered. He manifested such submission, obedience and apostolic fervor that these qualities were unsurpassed. He thus became the fourth member of the new Congregation.

He became a tireless and assiduous **Confessor**. He **preached** with such zeal and ardor, that he would break out in a sweat, even in the dead of winter. As he

had a very strong voice, that served his zeal well, while he was preaching in St. Anastasia's, he could be heard in the adjoining square. He **taught high school** with such clarity and method that his students were traditionally the most attentive. He had for them a sincere affection [57], and he was deeply loved by them in return. Although he had known the world and the life of the barracks, in his manner and speech, he had such a simplicity that he was compared to a dove of peace. Even in his latter years, he was so humble that if he had ever committed any defect, even involuntarily, he was ever ready to kneel down to ask pardon for it. He would ask for penances, not only in private, but also in public.

He really seemed to love to mortify his palate. One time, he and another Priest, had returned to Sezano after a long journey. He and his companions went into the House to rest themselves, and the attendant there, whose name was Placidus, seeing them tired and sweating, offered them two eggs and a glass of wine. When each of them had eaten the eggs, with bread, Fr. Brugnoli said to his companion: 'Now that we are sufficiently refreshed, can we make of this wine a little offering to the Blessed Mother? What do you think?' The other said that he was willing, so they directed the steward to bring the wine back from whence it came.

Fr. Brugnoli had a fine mind and worked always to perfect the art he had learned in school. In architecture, he was very competent. He played a major role in all of our construction programs, both in the city, as well as those in the country. He had a marked ability for the management of our country estate, and worked out there for many years with distinction. He was also asked by the Jesuit Fathers to assist them in their construction and he designed and supervised the building of the new wing of their Novitiate in Verona dedicated to St. Anthony.

He had a great esteem for the Company of Jesus, and for all religious orders. In his affection, however, he preferred no other group to his own beloved little Congregation, as both right reason and filial piety demand. We all remember the sincere joy he would experience whenever anyone entered our Congregation. Even as an old man, and in failing health, he would bang his cane on the ground, saying: 'Let them come in battalions, and work for the glory of God!'

He himself never stopped working. During his last years, his mental faculties diminished due to illness. He would have to be [58] carried out to his Confessional, where long lines of men awaited him. As a consolation, he would celebrate Mass every day with a piety, and most exact observance of the rubrics, that were truly admirable. He spent much of his day in prayer. How moving it was to see this venerable, old man, slowly making his way along the corridors, leaning on his cane, bowing to the holy images as he passed.

His last illness was quite protracted, but he never manifested any sign of impatience. Whenever he was asked how he felt, he would always answer: 'Oh, just fine!' He did, however, suffer a great deal, but despite it, he still wanted more to offer up out of love for the Lord. When he was near death, someone said to him:

‘Father, it is not yet time to die.’ He answered: ‘that’s good – I can still suffer some more!’²¹

He received the Last Sacraments with much tranquility and devotion. With the names of Jesus and Mary on his lips, he breathed his last on Friday, November 18, 1858. His funeral was well attended by the laity, and also the boys of the Oratory of the Stimate, for whom he had done so much; now he enjoys, as he will forever, the reward of his many labors for the Congregation, for his fellow man, and all for the glory of God. May the hope of a similar reward animate all of us along the same path, and may we all attain the same glory.²²

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**Compendium
of the Life of the Novice Cleric,
LOUIS SALVI**

He was born in Verona of an upright and well-to-do family in 1841. As a student in the first year of theology, he entered the Stimate in 1859. After only four months of Novitiate, in which he felt himself to be most blessed, and most happy, Louis Salvi died. So many times this good confrere thanked God for the benefit of having been called to the religious life. He breathed forth his blessed soul into the embrace of the Lord, after an illness of only eight days. He was strengthened by all the comforts of religion, and exchanged this life for that of heaven, at the age of 18. May his angelic soul intercede for us.

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**Compendium
of the Life of the Professed Cleric,
FRANCIS MADINELLI**

He was born in Verona in St. Stephen’s Parish in the year 1840. His parents were Agosto Madinelli and Rose Marani²³. From the time he was a child, he manifested a genuine piety. When he was 15 years of age, he entered the Stimate, where he showed a generous spirit of devotion and obedience.

After his Profession, he received Minor Orders. Shortly thereafter, he contracted military fever, that later developed into tuberculosis. His illness was long

²¹ The Countess Fietta [as well as her husband, the Count, a very learned man, and the author of the work: *Nicholas Boccasino*, were very devoted to our Congregation], wished to have these words embroidered in silk over two bands of velvet: ‘I can still suffer!’ – in the sense in which these were said, they were truly sublime.

²² He was one of the three Confreres, who, with the Father Founder, renounced the huge Cartolari inheritance.

²³ Translator’s Note: a revered Stigmatine family name!

and painful, but his patience remained constant. Without ever complaining about his sufferings, he passed his time praying to God, and expressed the desire of being united with him in heaven. During his last weeks, he received Holy Viaticum [60] many times. The morning of his death, which occurred October 26, 1859, he earnestly desired to receive Holy Communion. Shortly after receiving his Lord, he entered his last agony and quietly passed away.

He was 19 years of age.

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