

VI. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Congregavit Nos In Unum [February 2, 1994]

Introduction¹⁸⁴: Theology - Canons - Society - Changes Objectives [## 1-7]

[1] **Trinitarian Dimension**: The love of **Christ** has gathered a great number of disciples to become one, so that like him and thanks to him, in the **Spirit**, they might throughout the centuries, be able to respond to the love of the **Father**... [# 1]

{2] **Theological Development**: Religious community is not simply a collection of Christians in search of personal perfection, Much more deeply it is a participation in, and qualified witness of the Church-mystery, since it is a living expression and privileged fulfillment of its own particular 'communion', of the great Trinitarian ***koinonia***, in which the **Father** has willed that men and women have part in the **Son** and in the **Holy Spirit** . [# 2].

[3] **Canonical Development**: While the Code of 1917 could have given the impression of concentrating on exterior elements and uniformity of life-style, Vat II [cf. PC 15] and the new Code [cf. Can. 587; 602; 607; 608; 619; 665; 731, § 1] insist explicitly on the spiritual dimension and on the bond of fraternity which must unite all members in charity. The new Code has synthesized these two elements in speaking of 'living a fraternal life in common.' Thus, in community life, two elements of union and of unity among the members can be distinguished:

- the more spiritual: 'fraternity', or 'fraternal communion, which arises from hearts animated by charity. It underlines 'communion of life' and interpersonal relationships;

- the more visible, life in common, or 'community life', which consists in one's own lawfully constituted religious house, and in 'leading a common life' through fidelity to the same norms, taking part in common acts, and collaboration in common services. [# 3].

[4] **Structure of the Document**:

- Religious Community as gift: part of God's plan and He wishes to share His life in communion;

- Religious Community as the place of becoming brothers and sisters;

- Religious Community as the Place of Mission.

Part One: Gift [## 8-10]

The Church herself is Communion: this is our highest vocation: to enter into communion with God and with our brothers and sisters. In his great love, the Father sent his Son, the new Adam, to reconstitute all creation and bring it to full unity. During the Last Supper, he entrusted to them the new commandment of mutual love, a new

¹⁸⁴ ***Congregavit Nos in Unum Christi Amor*** - Cong. for ICLSAC]- February 2, 1994.

commandment, I give you , to love one another even as I have loved you [cf. Jn 13:34; 15:2]; **He instituted the Eucharist**, which, making us share in the one bread and one cup, nourishes mutual love. The first monastic communities looked to **the community of Jerusalem** as their ideal of life... so they set out to live **the radical communion** of material and spiritual goods and the unity established by Christ. For religious, fraternal life has broader and deeper dimensions which derive from the fundamental demand of this special vocation, the search for God Alone in silence and prayer - contemplation becomes a force liberating them from every form of selfishness.

Part Two: Religious Community a Place of 'Becoming' [## 11-57]

Spirituality and Community Prayer: every authentic Christian community is seen in itself a theological reality, an object of contemplation. **Christ** calls all together, his brothers and sisters, to speak with them and to unite them to himself and to each other in the **Eucharist**, to assimilate them increasingly into his living and visible **Body**, in whom the **Spirit** lives, on journey towards the **Father**. As happened in the first community in Jerusalem [cf. Ac 2:42], the word, the Eucharist, common prayer, dedication and fidelity to the teaching of the Apostles and their successors, put one in touch with God's great works. It is around the Eucharist, celebrated or adored, the source and summit of all activity in the Church, that the communion of souls is built up. Greater emphasis must be placed on the inner aspect, on the filial relationship to the **Father**, on the intimate and spousal relationship with **Christ**, on the personal deepening of what is celebrated and lived in community prayer, on the interior and exterior silence that leaves space for the Word and the **Spirit** to regenerate the more hidden depths.

For many communities, the sharing of *Lectio Divina* and reflection on the word of God as well as the sharing of personal faith-experiences and apostolic concerns have been particularly fruitful [# 16]. Men and women consecrated to God fail to meet their historical challenge if they do not correspond to the 'search for God' in our contemporaries who will then perhaps turn to other erroneous paths in an effort to satisfy their thirst for the Absolute [# 20]. Much less attention has been paid, however, to the ascetic commitment which is necessary and irreplaceable for any liberation capable of transforming a group of people into a Christian fraternity [# 23].

The community becomes **Schola Amoris**, a School of Love, for young people and adults - a school in which all learn to love God, to love the brothers and sisters with whom they live, and to love humanity, which is in great need of God's mercy and of fraternal solidarity [# 25]. Every day, communities take up again their journey [# 26]. Being able to look forward to the next day with the hope of meeting the Lord always and everywhere: these are things that nourish serenity, peace and joy. They become strength in apostolic action [# 28].

Because religious community is a **Schola Amoris**, which helps one grow in love for God and for one's brothers and sisters, it is a place for human growth. The path toward human maturity, which is a pre-requisite of a radiant evangelical life, is a process which knows no limits, since it involves continuous enrichment not only of

spiritual values but also of values in the psychological, cultural and social order. The process of maturing takes place through one's identifying with the will of God [## 35, f.]. In this dynamic, the consecrated person and the religious community are a proposal of the Gospel, a proposal which manifests the presence of Christ in the world.

Religious community becomes the place where we learn daily to take on that **new mind** which allows us to live in fraternal communion through the richness of diverse gifts and which, at the same time, fosters a convergence of these gifts towards fraternity and towards co-responsibility in the apostolic plan. In order to realize such a community and apostolic 'symphony', it is necessary to give thanks - to cultivate mutual respect - to focus on a common mission - to recall that the apostolic mission is entrusted to the community - to consider that all religious are sent by their communities [## 39, f.].

Religious profession expresses the gift of self to God and to the Church - a gift, however, which is lived in the community of a religious family. Religious are not only called to an individual personal vocation. Their call is also a **con-vocation** - they are called with others, with whom they share their daily life. The renewal of recent years, re-emphasizing the importance of the **originating charism by rich theological reflection**, has promised the unity of community [##44, f.].

Part Three: Communion a Place of Mission [## 58-70]

Just as the Holy Spirit anointed the Church in the Upper Room to send her out to evangelize the world, so every religious community as an authentic Pneumatic community of the Risen One is also and, according to its own nature, apostolic [# 58]. The religious community as a unit, constitutes a particularly effective announcement of the Christian message [# 60].

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2. A THEOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AS "COMMUNITY"

[A] Biblical / Theological Background

[I] Trinitarian Dimensions

Presentation¹⁸⁵:

[1] From the earliest times of the revealed word, there may be noted the tendency of "coming together" to ponder the Word of God - to make decisions together - to work for one another. The **Early Church**, as will be seen, is a special example of this: the lived Communion of the Twelve around Jesus is what gave the first Christians that lived ideal of the "one heart and the one soul". All of this was but a dim reflection of the **Trinitarian *koinonia***. Far above and beyond the many expressions of **faith**

¹⁸⁵ cf. Fabio Ciardi, ***KOINONIA. Itinerario teologico-spirituale della Comunita' Religiosa***. Roma: Citta' Nuova 1992, pp. 205-220, *passim*

gatherings - and even beyond that of Christ with His "own", there is the reality of the Trinity, into Whose image and likeness all human beings have been created. This is the **Divine *agape***, the **ineffable Communion of Distinct Persons**. Every Christian community is meant to be **a sacrament of the *agape* of God, an Icon of the Invisible God**. It is here that one reflects, shares and lives the Unity and Trinity within God. This is the sublime nature of the Trinity - and the ultimate vocation of Believers.

[2] Pondering the special work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the many souls and many hearts were **bonded together** to make one soul and one heart. It would only be the infinite power of the Trinity that could bring such diversity, animosity, pluralism - into a unity. The Holy Spirit is the ***pax unitatis***, as in this infinite Mystery the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are not three gods, but One, in Three Persons. The peace of such unity surpasses all intelligence, and all human capacity unaided to achieve. The Church can have this "peace" only as long as it is **on the Way** to eternal life, in its perennial quest for perfect community. Religious are called to continue the founding experience of Jerusalem, with all its dimensions.

[3] Throughout the long history of religious life, the image of the Trinity is **the Ultimate Source** of the real challenge of community. In the same way in which God is One alone in Himself, and as there are three Persons in Him, without the Father being [ontologically] 'greater' than the Son, nor the Spirit being any less, or 'later', than the Son - all are called to live this Trinitarian image. Religious communities are called to be a reproduction of the Trinitarian unity. Today the Church has a better understanding of herself as 'Mystery' - it indeed is called to be a Church of the Trinity. Thus, there is a possibility to fathom ever more deeply the terms of this mystery, its mystical and Trinitarian dimensions. Every form of community in the Church flows ultimately from the **Trinitarian community**. The foundations of all Christian community are to be sought in the Trinitarian life, shared by the faithful, through their being **in-grafted into Jesus Christ**. Each community, families as well as religious, are a **participation** and significant **expression** of the broader ecclesial community.

[4] The entire c. 6 of LG presents the religious vocation as within the Mystery of the Church, as a constitutive dimension of her. Religious Life is a vital part of the Church of the Trinity - and the consecrated life can only have a true understanding of itself by beginning with this mystery. This form of life springs from the father's eternal love, as a precious gift of Grace given to some by the Father [cf. LG 42 c]. The Consecrated Life continuously represents in the Church that form of life that the Divine Son embraced when He came into this world [cf. LG 44 c]. This life is lived in docility to the Holy Spirit, for an ever greater holiness of the Church, and for the greater glory of the One and Undivided Trinity. In Christ, and through Him, He is the origin and the font of all holiness [cf. LG 47].

[5] Religious Consecration is a certain radicalization of the Sacrament of Baptism [Confirmation] which places the religious in **direct relationship with the Triune God**. The Council Document PC understood religious life in a Trinitarian key: it places the Father as the Source of every vocation to holiness; the Son is the object of the "Imitation", or the ***sequela***; - and the Holy Spirit is the One Who moves the

consecrated to live ever more for Jesus Christ and for the Church [cf. PC 1 c]. Religious Consecration creates **a new bond** of a human being with God, One and Triune, in Jesus Christ and produces within the person a certain joy of belonging exclusively to God - of being a particular heredity of the Most Holy Trinity [cf. RH ## 7, 8]. Canon Law offers the Trinitarian dimension in its definition of consecration: "Life consecrated through profession of the evangelical counsels, is a stable form of living, in which the faithful follow **Christ** more closely, under the action of the **Holy Spirit**, and are totally dedicated to **God**, who is supremely loved. By a new and special title they seek the perfection of charity in the service of God's kingdom, for the honor of God, the building up of the Church and the salvation of the world. They are a splendid sign of the Church as they foretell the heavenly glory." [cf. Can. 575, § 1].

[6] The apostolic dimension of **diakonia** differs from community to community - but, all of it flows from the ideal of the Most Blessed Trinity. In the Pope's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, **Vita Consecrata**, [March 25, 1996], the Pope proceeds from the Trinity, to Community, to Apostolicity - the latter will be effective only if it flows from the first two. This is a kind of "**ec-stasi**" of love: the community can open itself toward others, only if it is rooted deeply in the Life and Mission of the Trinity. Each of the baptized in some way continues the Mission that Jesus received from His Father, carried out under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

1. **The Trinity is the Origin and the Source of Communion**

a. The Church has been described as "**an Icon of the Trinity**"; she can never fulfill her destiny without returning to her Source. This holds as well for the re-discovery of certain dimensions of the Holy Spirit in the Church today - He is at work for the Father and the Son. Hence, to institute a new, deeper relationship with the Spirit, implies being renewed in the Trinity. It is only in the Spirit, that we are able to cry out *Abba*, and only the Spirit can bring us to confess that Jesus indeed is the Lord. The risk for theology has always been a kind of "amorphous" God, One lost in metaphysics - rather than the God of the Living, Love and Compassion, well supported by the application of the best the human mind can engender. It no longer be said that the doctrine of the Trinity serves no practical purpose - the Trinitarian Mystery has come more and more into the very heart of the treatises of all branches of theology.

b. The Documents of Vat. II have given a great impetus to Trinitarian studies - LG, e.g., is a **Trinitarian Ecclesiology**; AG is a **Trinitarian Missiology**. LG, though, has set the tone for the entire Council - the Church is presented as the People of God gathered in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit [cf. LG 4]: some see a play on words in the original Latin - **de unitate ... plebs adunata**. The Latin preposition **de** indicates simultaneously the idea of **imitation** [as in "John **of** St. Thomas"] and that of **participation** [as "Sister Mary Ignatius **of** the Trinity"]. This is the great and well-founded hope of Unity - there is no authentic unity unless it flows from the Trinity.

c. The Trinity is indeed the **Origin**, the **Source** of the unity of the Church: she proceeds from the love of the eternal Father, founded in time by Christ the Lord, and gathered through the Holy Spirit [cf. GS 40]. The Trinity needs to play its unique role in ecumenism: the supreme model and principle of the unity of all peoples is that unity found in the Trinity of Persons, one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit [cf. UR 20 f]. The Church prays for her success in history: the Church both prays and works, so that the entire fullness of the cosmos be transformed into the People of God, the Body of the Lord Jesus and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. All will come together under Jesus Christ, to Whom be rendered all honor and glory to the Creator, the Father of the Universe [cf. LG 17].

d. In communicating Himself in Christ and in the Spirit, God is revealed as the One Who is most intimately Love, Mercy. Pondering on how He has given Himself so completely in Christ there is grasped to some extent that true love is **Self-giving**: it is from this that we have understood Love: He has given His life for us! [cf. 1 Jn 3:16]. Love is revealed by giving of itself - in Himself, God is Love, Who gives of Himself, **the Trinity is an eternal, infinite Self-giving** [c f. 1 Jn 4:8, 16]. The *economic Trinity* makes known the essential characteristics of the intimate life of God the *immanent Trinity*, necessary for our salvation.

e. The Trinity thus constitutes **a life of love**, radically oriented to **opening itself**, and of diffusing itself outward - all Goodness is diffusive of itself, by its very nature. The Trinity is eternally "restless" in establishing new nuclei of communion which would participate in the same reality of communion, in that same life of love that fills the Trinitarian existence:

- this is most evident in **the Plan of Creation**: humanity, the high-point of creation, reveals in itself the imprint of the Creator God, a Communion of Persons. Revelation indicates to us the very foundation of the existence, of reality, the ultimate "form" of all reality - this is Love. The ultimate sense of humanity is to be interpersonal."

- this is likewise true in the **Plan of Salvation**: the Church, willed by the Father, appears as the creature of the Son, always vivified by the Holy Spirit. It is ultimately the work of the Most Blessed Trinity. As each human being has been created to the image and likeness of God, so the Church represents the "total" Christ, and is, in time, the manifestation of the Trinity: As the father has sent Me, I send you! [cf. Jn 20:21].¹⁸⁶

2. **A Family united in the One Father**

a. The initiative for the Plan of Salvation flows from the father, as the Font of Love. It is He who decrees the elevation of humanity to the participation in the Divine Life [cf. LG 2; AG 2]. Since divine life is Trinitarian, it is He Who calls all to

¹⁸⁶ cf. Paolo CIPOLLONE, *Studio sulla Spiritualita' Trinitaria nei capitoli I - VII della 'LG'*. Roma: Pro Sanctitate 1986.

share in it - not individually, but together, as member of His one Family. This has been pleasing to God, precisely because the Father chose to call all human beings to a share in His life, not one by one, without any connection, but to gather them together as a People, in which His children who were dispersed with be gathered together [cf. AG 2].

b. The Father has His own precise Plan: and this includes the extension of His own Trinitarian life to all human beings. By means of Jesus Christ, the Father chose to associate all in relationships of filiation and spiration of His own inner life. He chose to re-generate His own Son in every person, and to infuse His own Spirit into all, and to unite all men and women among themselves in the most intimate communion, so that all would be One as the Father and the Son are One in the Holy Spirit of Love .

c. In the generation of the Divine Son, we are all rendered His children, and we are truly His. Thanks to His grand love [cf. 1 Jn 3:1], we can indeed all call Him 'Father' [cf. Lk 11:2]. This relationship of filiation establishes in fact **a most intimate and connatural bond**, even closer than would be a physical generation. The Christians generated by the mysteries are sons and daughters of God even more so than they are of their own blood parents. From the moment we pray the Our father, and call God *ABBA*, we need to refer to all others as brothers and sisters. If we are indeed children of the same Father, we are brothers and sisters with all others. This is the basis for the **universal filiation, fraternity** - of which every single human community is some kind of an expression. The greatest joy that we can give to God is that of presenting ourselves to Him as a united family. we should not present anything at the altar if we have anything against someone else [cf. Mt 5:23, f.]. Our oblation is not pleasing to Him if it does not flow from unity with all brothers and sisters.

d. Religious Life has often re-affirmed the reality of the One Father, taking inspiration from the Words of Jesus: call no one your Father on earth, because there is only one Who is your Father, our Father in heaven. This emphasizes as well the reality of fraternity: you are all brothers and sisters [cf. Mt 23:8-9]. Some communities figure this in the head of the Community, the *Abbot*. The name 'Father' is conferred on him in faith, in that he is meant to occupy the place of Jesus Christ. The *Abbot* is called 'Father' simply to honor Christ. All are considered equal before their Father.

3. We are made 'One' in Christ Jesus

a. The initiative of the Divine Plan of Salvation - which is that of uniting all in a Trinitarian unity, constituting humanity as **God's Family** - begins with the Father, as the Font of Love. This Plan finds its realization in the Son's own mission, Who has come to gather us as God's Family. He prophesied that as great High Priest, He would have to die, to gather together the dispersed children of God [cf. Jn 11:52]. Our Divine Filiation is made possible in the Son. He is the Mediator of our divine life - the Trinity communicates its own life through Him.

b. The Council refers to Christ's accomplishment by reading the Divine Plan as ultimately **'communion.'** For the sake of establishing peace, or communion with Himself, and of realizing among sinful human beings **a certain fraternal union**, He decided to enter history in a new and definitive manner, by sending His Son [cf. AG 3]. The goal of the Father is always the same: to make, and to re-make all men and women, brothers and sisters, generating them as His own adopted Children. Their life is precisely that of His own Son, Who has made Himself the Brother of every person, consenting that all become children in Him, as like He is, associating themselves with him. Christ has loved His Spouse and has **given himself up for her** for the sake of sanctifying her, and has associated her with himself by **an indissoluble pact**. He ceaselessly nourishes her, takes care of her, and after having purified her, He willed that she be joined to him in love and fidelity. Finally, He fills her with those heavenly graces in order to be able to understand the charity of God and of Jesus Christ towards the Church - a charity which surpasses all knowledge [cf. LG 6].

c. The Divine Life flourishes first of all in Christ Himself, as the First-born of every creature. In Him, dwells the fullness of the Divinity. Through Him this life reaches us and we are all made **sharers in this fullness of His** [cf. Col 2:9]. And so it is that Christ can fulfill the Church with His own personal gifts, so that it tend forward and come to that total fullness of God [cf. LG 7]. Through Christ there reaches the Church the Divine Trinitarian life - and the Church, entering into communion with Jesus Christ, is **immersed into the Trinitarian unity**. This is the 'explanation' of **Baptism** that in so far as it is **communion in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ**, it is **immersion** into the Trinity [cf. Mt 28:19]. This is the foundation of **a new participation** in the very nature of god [cf. 2 P 1:4. Thus, in the Eucharist, a Communion in the Body and Blood of the Lord, permits us to enter into **communion** with the Trinity [cf. UR 15].

d. The central means of the transmission of this life, mediated through the Sacraments and assimilation into Christ, remains the **Paschal Event**. Here Jesus reveals the Trinitarian Mystery and participates in it - here is simply consumed all that is 'negative' in human beings in the **Living Flame of Love**, and each person is "realized" by the work of salvation.

1.] It is here that the **self-emptying** of each person allows for that encounter between the Father and all who have once again become His children. Here the Holy Spirit comes as **Gift**, and creates out of nothing, resistance, the **new community**, as the principle of **'re-capitulation' in God of the entire universe**.

2.] In the **Paschal Mystery** Jesus generates us to this **new life** - unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, and this gives us new life as God's children. Here the **'old person'** is crucified with Him and dies with him in sharing in His death. Here, in His resurrection, there is born the **'new person'** - this is not some isolated individual, but the entire people who become as Christ, to 'total' Christ. This is the bursting forth of the Trinitarian life into human history, the founding event, and that really bringing forth the Church as the divine life that is shared. At the same time, the Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ offers the

possibility of the return of humanity in the Trinity. The heavens are newly opened and we are called to rise up and sit with Christ at the right hand of the Father.

e. The fruit of Redemption is that the Precious Blood of Jesus has given us the new life of Christ Himself. The Holy Spirit con-forms/ figures us to Jesus Christ - and being in-grafted into Christ, we are introduced into an ever more personal relationship with the Father so that we become sharers in His life of the Trinitarian *koinonia*. This participation in the Trinitarian life makes possible the ecclesial *koinonia*. As a fruit of the relationship of Filiation with the Father, the Religious Community appears as a Family of brothers and sisters. As a fruit of the relationship with Christ, this appears as a body that transcends divisions: there is no longer Jew, or Greek, nor slave, nor free, there is no longer man or woman. The unity between the components, the community appears so strong that all can be one in Jesus Christ [cf. Ga 3:28]. Since all are one in Christ, the community might indeed have one heart and one soul. In the family of God no one is "father" - nor is anyone that "master" - we have but one Teacher, Jesus [cf. Mt 23:10]. The members of Jesus' community are all disciples held together by the One teacher - this is the School of the Lord's Service.

4. In the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit

a. The initiative of the Father and the work of the Son find their fulfillment in the sending of the Holy Spirit. He works within, interiorizing, actualizing the work of salvation [cf. LG 4; AG 4]. In the Paschal Event, Jesus Christ serves as the Bearer of the Spirit, and the One Who gives the Spirit. Jesus opens the way for the Holy Spirit, pouring Himself out for humanity. The Glory that He receives from His Father is what constitutes Him as Son, and binds Him to His Father. He communicates this to His "own" so that all might **enter into the Trinitarian communion**. The Glory that the Father has given, He then pours out, so that all might be like the Father and the Son, one [cf. Jn 17:22].

b. In the Latin West, the Holy Spirit is seen as the Link of Love - the **Bond of Love** between the Father and the Son. In the Son, He is the Bond between creatures and the Father. He is the Bond of Love when He comes, He always creates this same Bond of Love among the faithful, by placing Himself as **the source of the ecclesial communion**, which He continually sustains and vivifies. The Work of the Spirit is the *koinonia*, as He appeared on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. He, as the intimate Life of God, is **the Gift and Love made Person**. The Holy Spirit is communion, friendship, charity, unity, Gift.

c. With the coming of the Spirit, He brings with Him **the Gift of Love**, allowing communion to develop. He Himself is the Love of God, given and returned in the human heart [cf. Rm 5:5]. The Love is of the Spirit [cf. Rm 15:30; Col 1:8] - the Love which the Spirit pours out into the hearts of human beings is resolved as **the Gift of Himself** to Brothers and Sisters, involving them in the **reciprocity of love**, according to the Lord's command - that unity result, according to the last breath of the Lord.

d. The Holy Spirit, as the Person Who is '**given**', is the Bond of Love. In God, unity is two-fold: that of the divine nature and that of Love, which is the Holy Spirit. We are called to **reproduce that unity which exists in God**. Therefore, it does not suffice that we all have, through grace, the same divine life - which renders us **sharers in God's nature**. It is further required that we become **united with God and among one another**, through love in the Personal Love which is the Holy Spirit [cf. St. Thomas, *In Jo.*, 17, 26]. This, then, is the work of the Spirit in the Church: He builds it up [cf. I Co 3:16; Ep 2:22] - He vivifies it with His gifts [cf. I Co 12:7-11] - He unifies it in a way that all believers become 'One' in Christ [cf. Ga 3:28]. The One and the same Spirit, assimilates every Christian to Jesus Christ, to form one Body with him [cf. Ep 4:4; I Co 12:8, f.; RM 12:6, f.].

e. In this manner, the community of believers enters into **the same relationship of agape'** as that which **binds** the Father and the Son [cf. Jn 14:22, ff., 31; 15:9, f.; 17:26]. The Spirit, the **Principle of Communion** of the Father and the Son, makes Himself the Principle of Communion within the Church herself. The Father and the Son have willed that we become united among ourselves and with Them, by means of the One Who is their Communion, and Who has assembled in unity by means of that Gift that is common to Both, i.e., by means of the Holy Spirit, God and Gift of God. To become 'Christian' means to become '**communion**', and thus to penetrate into the manner of the essential being of the Spirit. The paradoxical property of the Spirit is that of being 'communion', of having the supreme identity of persons proper to the entire movement of unity. Whoever lives of the Spirit, is 'spiritual', and so ought to conduct him/herself always and essentially as unifying, communicating - **a person of community**.

f. Animated by the Spirit, the community is unified as **a living spiritual temple**. The first Christians, as prototypes of the later monastic communities, certainly became Temples of God - they became this not so much as individuals, but as **communities** gathered together they became Temples of God. In other words, they had become a sacred place, a unique place for their Lord. The Holy Spirit communicates to religious communities **His typical stamp of freedom** which while it unites persons, it distinguishes them in the variety of gifts what each one would receive and share. The dynamism of the Holy Spirit thus keeps unity from becoming 'massification', or an amorphous flattening of individuality. Individual members enjoy the Plan which God has prepared by weaving at the same time relationships of **reciprocal communion** in harmony. The Spirit Who is always new, brings as Gift to the Community His own creativity, impeding boring repetitions, or blocking anyone from static lethargy. The Holy Spirit Himself is the **ecstasi of the Trinity** - He is the **openness**, continuing to work, even within established communities, seeking to intensify, spread community values. Thanks to the Spirit, the community does not close itself in, but rather communicates His own life into **a missionary openness**, involving the realities with which he comes in contact into the process of unification, a result of the Spirit.

g. The Three Divine Persons introduce us into their Life. The Unity of the Trinity is the basis for Ecclesial Unity. Through the initiative of the Father and the work

of the Son, prolonged by the Holy Spirit, and actualized in the preaching of the Apostles, and in the mediation of the sacraments: we are all **in-grafted into that unity**, we live in, and of, that unity. This is God, the Trinity, who shares with us and involves us, in His own life

SOURCES OF COMMUNION

[I] A Gift of the Spirit, to seek the Father, following Christ [Strengthened by God's Word; The Eucharist; - one's Confrere¹⁸⁷]

Presentation:

[1] The Religious Communion is born of the Love and Truth within the Most Blessed Trinity, through the Paschal Event. In its theological dimension, the community needs continuous nourishment on the part of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is nourished from on-high through the Gift of God's Word, also as this is mediated through **the founding charism**; the **Most Blessed Sacrament**, and **the sharing presence** of one's sister or brother of the same religious community. The members of the Early Community of Jerusalem lived of these divine realities: they were assiduous in listening to the teaching of the Apostles and fraternal union - in the breaking of the Bread and in prayers [cf. Ac 2:42]. Here they found the real possibilities of building up among themselves that unity of one heart and one soul.

[2] Nourished by the two-fold Table of the Lord: The Scriptures and the Eucharist, and by fraternal communion, the religious community also is built up in his most profound reality and can become that which it is called to be: a privileged place of the presence of Jesus Christ. The Council has noted this: On the example of the Early Church in which the multitude of believers was of one heart and one soul [cf. Ac 4:32], life in common, nourished by the teaching of the Gospel, the sacred Liturgy and above all, by the Eucharist, may all persevere in prayer and in the communion of the same spirit [cf. Ac 2:42] [**PC 15**]. The religious community is called to continue to show itself, in its *descending* phase, to be the fruit of the love within the Most Blessed Trinity, which constantly communicates itself].

1. Unity in God's Word, also as Mediated in the Founding Charism

a. It is one and the same call to holiness that calls together and unifies among themselves the individual members of the community. The appeal of Jesus Christ: **Come and follow Me!** - rings out still in the hearts of many. It is this appeal that over the centuries has assembled different personalities in one and the same community - as when it resounded for the first time on the shores of Lake Genesareth which gave origin to those who accepted following Christ more closely as a "college",

¹⁸⁷ cf. F. Ciardi, *Koinonia. Itinerario teologico-spirituale della comunita' religiosa*. Roma: Citta' Nuova 1992, pp. 239 - 250, *passim*.

or "communion." This Word continues to manifest all its interior force of convocation, capable of creating communion, peoples, unity.

b. Long ago the community of the People of Israel found its origin in a call, that addressed to Abraham - and was eventually constituted a "People" by the Word of God received on Sinai [cf. Ex 24:7, f.]. Now, the New People of God, represented by the Twelve, symbolizing the 12 Tribes of Israel, as the New Israel, comes to birth from a call of the Lord. **Each one is called personally by name, one by one**, and they become 'apostles', following more closely after the Lord, imitating Him, putting on His "mind." The Church herself is born by taking in the Word of Peter, who communicates the event of the Word made flesh, "setting up His tent among us " [John's Prologue]. This story is handed on to the Church, and this process of Tradition has continued across the centuries of two millennia of Church life [cf. Ac 2:42], preparing for the New Evangelization at the Dawn of the Third Millennium. It is always the same process: Each community is born and grows by the acceptance of the Word [cf. 1 Th 1:5-10]. The Acts are the description of the trajectory of the Word of God: everywhere it goes, it generates the 'Church'. The Church is always a **con-vocation: a common call** which God directs toward every person. These, united in the Name of Jesus, in His Word, and into Him Who is the Word - all become **united** among themselves by His presence [cf. Mt 18:20, to the point of becoming **one sole reality in Jesus Christ**].

c. The entire NT is witness to this dynamic through which the Word of Christ builds up community. As a "Word of salvation" [cf. Ac 13:26], a "Word of Life" [cf. Ph 2:16], the Word eternally generated by the Father, constantly through the ages generates new life in whoever accepts to be baptized, immersed into the Mystery of the Trinity, sharing in the Paschal Mystery, becoming members of the 'Church', tending toward eternal reunion in the Father's House. Baptism, in fact, is that bath accompanied by the Word [cf. Ep 5:26]. Christians are generated not by a corruptible seed, but one that is immortal, i.e., by the Word of God which is eternally alive [cf. 1 P 1:23]. Of His own will, God has indeed generated us all with His one word of truth [cf. Jas 1:18].

1.] Generated by the Word of God - poured forth from His Sacred Stigmata - breathed forth as Tongues of Fire - offered as a Mystical Body on the Offertory Altar of Gethsemane - and in the resurrection: the Church continues to increase, intensify. In the Acts of the Apostles, the emphasis is on growth according to the depth in which the Word of God penetrates hearts [cf. Ac 6:7; 12:24; 19:20]. The Word nourishes the Church, unifies her, to the point of bringing the faithful to the sharing the same ideals, the same ordeals, even to a unity of thought the same "mind" as Jesus Christ [cf. 1 Co 2:16; Ph 2:5].

2.] Through His Word - which is His "Person" - Jesus communicates Himself to each one, making Himself all things to all. His Person is the Unity of Faith - the Church, as a result of Him, becomes one sole body, one sole spirit - because in her, there is only one faith [cf. Ep 4:5]. Consequently, Paul asks the faithful of Corinth that they become unanimous in speaking, that there be no divisions among them, but that all be in perfect union of thought and intentions [cf. 1 Co 1:10]. It is necessary

that we arrive at unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God [cf. Ep 4:13]. The faith is not only the principle of personal existence - it is also the principle of communion for individuals, and the source of unity for the entire Church.

3.] There is some analogy here for the foundation of a religious community. All are constituted in the strength of the call and of a specific word which actualizes, becomes concrete, in a specific charismatic identity, by the Word of the Gospel. The Religious Community springs into life from a call from Jesus Christ, in which there is reflected the eternal love of the Father, in the Personified Love of the Spirit. The Apostles in their personal journey of following the Lord more closely, were found immediately to be in the presence of others with like sentiments, convictions.

4.] As for the Apostles, so also for Religious - their vocation has to be a **con-vocation**. The religious vocation, in continuity with the vocation of the first disciples of the Lord, brings individuals to follow together the one Master, and come to constitute a communion of life with Him and among themselves. These are totally different "heterogeneous" individuals, who would have no other reason for mutual sharing if it had not been for that common call of following Jesus Christ more closely.

5.] The religious community is not "selective", in the sense that it does not result from people choosing their confreres they want to live with - in its ideal, it remains "elective", based on the faith that **God chooses** certain ones to come together, and through their on-going formation all are able to share the same ideals. It is an election by God's grace that respects the identity of **a Family of God** gathered in His Name, by His Word, nourished by the Eucharist, for apostolic commitment - and in the hope of eternal life with those the members serve. This new "family" is characterized as those who together are willing to follow the Father's will more intimately [cf. Mk 3:34, f.]. Religious Life can never come to life merely as the result of human planning - as necessary as all this is - but, for those who believe in it, it is the result of **a divine project, a Gift of the Holy Spirit**, which flows forth from **the Father's Will manifested in the Word of Jesus Christ**.

6.] Considering the Community as the fruit of the response to the common call and of the common fulfillment of God's Will, there is comprehended the fundamental role that the vow and practice of obedience performs. This is seen in service to the docile acceptance of **the Father's Will, manifested in the Son's Word, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit**. The living of obedience acquires its full intelligibility under the perspective of unity to which the community is called each day. This is the way the Church provides for religious to accept, and then carry out in full, the Father's Will. This is the path that leads to the one mind and heart so praised in the early Church - the result of a life-long effort to seek the Father, and to put on the mind of Christ Jesus.

d. In the religious life, the Word generates the unity acquire a particular visage. The call to the following/imitation of Jesus Christ comes habitually through the mediation of the **Founding Charism** of a gifted individual, so moved by the Holy Spirit, that is docilely accepted and lived in a specific community. The Founder and the

approved Institute serve in God's hands to mediate the Word of God, in **convocation** and in **communion**.

1.] The charism of an Institute, taken in its most sublime origin, finds its ultimate foundation in the Incarnate Word of God Who manifests Himself and speaks in some way in the Founding Charism. This appears as the Word of the One Incarnate Son of God, a word from the Word, offering a particular aspect of His Life or Mission, in the totality of the Gospel.

2.] The action of the Holy Spirit of revelation and of truth teaches the full truth, reminding us of all that Jesus has taught [cf. Jn 14:24-26; 16:13]. The Spirit inspires the Founding Charism as a profound, existential insight into a determined word of the Gospel Message - through this portal of the one word, passage, message, the minds and hearts of the docile recipients, instruments in the hands of the Spirit, is open to the broader deeper meaning of God's entire word [cf. Lk 24:45].

3.] In the light of that one particular gospel dimension - which might be an aspect of the mystery of Jesus Christ, His Mission from the Father, a specific phrase of His, or a summation of some aspects of the Gospel message - the Holy Spirit infuses, inspires a unique ability to read the entire Gospel, to contribute to the theology of the holy, to make an oblation to the Apostolic Mission of the Church. This insight that is afforded into the entire Gospel becomes then summarized in a kind of "**Prayer Word**", a brief phrase, or one word, that might offer a summary of a entire, life-long sublime ideal, handed down as a holy 'tradition' to succeeding generations. This central ideal then becomes a **key**, a core, through which the comprehend one's union with God, commitment to the Church and hope for everlasting life.

4.] The "**Founding Charism**" even before becoming a concrete response offered to the Church through the carrying out of some specific work, appears as a God-given capacity, empowerment of reading the entire Christian mystery in the light of one of its publicly inspired aspects: it becomes a concrete modality to live the entire Gospel. In the richness of God's Word, there can be a wide variety of modalities of reading, incarnating, translating the Gospel into daily life, persevering until death - as the riches of Jesus Christ are totally inexhaustible, imperscrutable! [cf. Ep 3:8]. Far beyond all knowledge, is the most sublime reality of the infinity of Trinitarian Love and Mercy [cf. Ep 3:19]. In Jesus Christ, there is truly the fullness of the Divinity [cf. Col 2:10].

5.] The Founding Charism becomes through **the lived experience** of those who are gifted with them, become their life's teaching. Through the Religious Family instituted by them, this becomes **a lived exegesis of an aspect of Divine Revelation**. Looking at them and their unique contribution to the Church through the centuries, there can be understood in a new manner the Gospel because they were able to translate this into life. The religious families appear almost as **a continuing Incarnation of the incarnate Word in His message borne for the Father, in the Holy Spirit**.

6.] The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation understood this type of **vital, vibrant lived exegesis**. In the Church, in fact, there is meant to be a

progressive comprehension of the Gospel - this comes through contemplation, committed study, lived **experience**, heeding the Magisterium of the Church [cf. DV 8]. This "Lived Experience" arises from a deeper understanding of God's Word, while contributing to this, if the other conditions above are met. The Holy Spirit, through a **particular experiential journey** of some gifted individual leads to this type of a deeper grasp of God's Word for the whole Church.

e. As in the Church, unity is given from the intimate perspective of the Word of Christ, in faith - and demands the assiduous perseverance in the Teaching of the Apostles to whom Jesus has entrusted His Gospel, His Mission the daily breaking of the Bread.

1.] In an analogous manner, the Religious Community finds its own unity in the reception of the charism that generated it, by being faithful to it. To it is entrusted a spiritual patrimony that contains the Gospel Word, in so far as this has been grasped, lived, by the Founder/Foundress and concretized, actualized - and perpetuated by the generations that followed after the initial foundation. The Council extends the invitation to let this light shine before the Church and to maintain faithfully the spirit, and the intentions proper to the Founding Charism - as also those "healthy traditions". All this constitutes the patrimony of a given institute [cf. PC 2 b].

2.] The conciliar and post-conciliar Magisterium has forcefully emphasized the value of these **constitutive realities** of every single religious family. In the many documents regarding the religious life, there is a constant return to familiar expressions, such as: the spirit, gift, service, purpose, end, inspiration, intention, charism, mission, nature, identity. There is always added the adjective "**proper**" to all these - as each community is distinct. The "identity" of each Institute is given from a particular manner of following/ imitating Jesus Christ, "putting on His mind." Each community has its own grace of configuration to an authentic dimension of His mystery, His Mission, His Person, offered by the Spirit

f. Even prior to the exterior forms legislating uniformity and some regimentation, there is the challenge for each community to seek constantly the unity of the Communion in the common reference to **each one's proper, own, charism**, in so far as this has been handed time from the initial graced period of "foundation." These are meant to be developed all across the succeeding generations [cf. *Mutuae Relationes*, 11]. The possessing of **a common heredity, a particular spiritual patrimony**, before becoming a genuine sociological factor and one of cohesion, there is already **the Pneumatological component inherent in each Institute, all the Gift of the Spirit**. There might be understood, then, how it is that such a great portion of the enormous energy given to renewal of the religious life was entrusted by the Magisterium of the Church to bringing out the more the richness of every charism. Paul VI challenged religious to drink the fresh waters of their own fountains, for renewed vigor and freshness.

2. Communion in the Eucharist

a. The second great gift that is offered to Religious Communities, so that each one might carry out its own vocation of being a *koinonia* in the Trinitarian *koinonia*, is the Eucharist. As a Paschal Sacrament, this opens the door to the inner depths of the Trinity, and makes the devotees sharers in the Trinitarian *agape*'. The Faithful, as the Council teaches, through the Eucharist, have access to God the Father through the Son and enter into Communion with the Most Holy Trinity [cf. UR 15].

1.] By being nourished on the Eucharist, Christians show concretely their unity as a People of God, which from this most august sacrament is adequately expressed and wondrously effected [cf. LG 11]. In the Eucharist, there is realized the Universal Communion, without limitations of time and space. Every Eucharistic celebration reunites all the members of the Church, all across the ages, into the unity in the one Body of Christ, the Lord of all time and space.

2.] The first Christians of Jerusalem were assiduous in the breaking of the Bread and this made of them one body and one soul alone. In fact, since there is only one bread so we, even though we are many, we are one body alone: we all share in the one Bread [cf. 1 Co 10:17].

3.] The Divine Life which Jesus came to bring on earth and which is communicated to all recipients in Baptism, reaches its fullness precisely in the Eucharist. Here Christ is given as food to nourish us with His own life. He came so that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly. In the Eucharist, He has made Himself the Bread of Life, that Bread which communicates life, vivifying our existence to the point of 'divinizing it', by intensifying the real share in the very nature of God.

4.] With the Eucharist, Christ did not wish to transform solely the individual believer who receives Communion of Him - but, the divine will was for all of humanity, even in its corporeal dimension, to the point of involving the cosmos itself in this unity. At the Table of Life, no one eats alone. Jesus has offered a very precise structure in His gesture that permits the transmission of His Bread of Life. This Supper is where all can find themselves together, as in a single Family, among brothers and sisters, the world over, at the same Table, down through the past, and onward toward the future - for those in Purgatory, joining with the Blessed in Heaven, while being one of the "militant" still on the Way. This not only creates the New Person, but the New People, gathered, assembled and vivified by the same Bread.

b. From the very beginning, believers have had the conviction that the Eucharist makes the Church. The *Didache*' reports prayer that might be Eucharistic, perhaps being composed around the year 50. The booklet presents a theme that would then become classic as constantly taken up through the long generations of the ages: as this broken bread, was once dispersed across the

mountains and hills, and was gathered to become one Bread, so, Lord, gather Your Church from the far ends of the earth into Your reign [cf. 9:4].

1.] Along this line, there will be developed the **Eucharistic Catechesis** from the Fathers to this present day. St. John Chrysostom, commenting on 1 Co took up again the image of the bread formed by many grains of wheat: what is this bread? It is the Body of the Lord. And what do they become who partake of It? The Body of Christ: they are not many bodies, but one alone! In fact, as bread is made up of many grains, and becomes so united that the individual grains can no longer be perceived - so, we are so intimately united and joined together in Jesus Christ.

2.] St. John Damascene wrote that the Eucharist is called '**communion**' and it truly is because through It we communicate and are united with one another. We become members of each other, given that we are **con-corporate with Jesus Christ**.

3.] St. Albert the Great summarized the Patristic teaching in these words: as the Bread, the matter of this sacrament, is made one from many grains, which offer their entire content and compenetrates one another, so the true Body of the Lord of Christ is made of many drops of blood of our nature, all mixed in with one another. In like manner, many of the faithful, united in affection and communicating with Christ the Head, mystically constitute the one Body of Christ. Therefore, this sacrament makes of a "Communion" of all our temporal and spiritual goods. In the species of this sacrament there is signified that Communion which implies the union of many into one - i.e., in the bread and wine. The reason is because the bread is made up of many grains and the wine of many grapes. By the very fact that Christ unites all to Himself, He unites them in reciprocal manner. When many realities are joined to one third reality, they are one among themselves.

4.] St. Thomas Aquinas: was a disciple of St. Albert and he writes that the Eucharist is the sacrament of the unity of the Church. The reason is that the unity of the Mystical Body is produced by the Real Body, sacramentally received. The real effect [*res*] of this sacrament is the unity of the Mystical Body. Charity is considered not only in its *habitus*, but also in its exercise.

5.] Pope Paul VI: closer to our own time, the Pontiff stated with firm conviction that the Eucharist was willed by Jesus Christ because out of peoples who were foreigners, dispersed and indifferent toward each other, He made of us a people joined, equal and friends. The Eucharist has been given to us because of a mass of peoples who were apathetic, self-centered, divided, adversary - we become His People, an authentic People, believing, loving, of one heart and one soul [cf. *Insegnamenti*, 1966].

7.] The Italian Bishops note that the Eucharist is that power which forms community, increases its potential for love. It renders the community a welcoming home for all, the village fountain which offers to all the water flowing from it, as Pope John would often say. In it, every diversity is compounded in harmony, every imploring voice receives a hearing, every need finds someone who will bend out of

love for those in need. The Eucharist opens up dialogue, openness and festival which are its known characteristics.

c. The Ecclesial *koinonia* in fact finds in the Eucharist its sign and cause. Nourished by the one Bread, we have the same life, we form the same body. The Eucharist is communion in Jesus Christ with one's brothers and sisters. Uniting believers through the Eucharist to Himself, and among all others into a single body, which is His Body, it brings about communion: fraternity, unity, life with God.

1.] The Council reiterates this traditional aspect of the Eucharist in some principal texts: in the breaking of the Eucharistic Bread there is represented and produced that unity of believers who constitute one sole body in Christ [cf. LG 3]. We are elevated to communion with Him and among ourselves [cf. LG 7]. The Eucharistic prayers also confirm this: To us, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of Your Son, grant the fullness of the Holy Spirit so that we might become in Christ one Body and one spirit [Eucharistic Prayer III].

2.] The Council stated: It is not possible that the Christian community be built up unless it has as its root and support the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist, from which the beginnings of every effort to form the community spirit must begin [PO 6].

d. In transforming a People into Christ, the Eucharist bestows on believers the possibility of fully carrying out the New Commandment. They truly can strive the more to love one another in so far as Christ has, **AS** He loves. In the Eucharist, He identifies Himself the more with each one of them, and in Him all learn to love. It is no accident that Jesus imposed the New Commandment while He gave the Eucharist. In this Sacrament of Love there is rendered possible the realization of the New Commandment of love.

1.] Pope John Paul II writes in this regard that the Eucharistic Worship constitutes the very soul of the entire Christian life. If in fact the Christian life is expressed in the carrying out of the greatest commandment, and that is, that of the Love of God and one's neighbor, the this love finds its source precisely in the Most Holy Sacrament, that is commonly referred to as the **Sacrament of Love**. The Eucharist signifies this charity, and therefore recalls it, renders it present and at the same time, realizes it. Not only do we know love, but we begin ourselves to love. We enter into that way of love and upon it we make certain progress. The genuine sense of the Eucharist becomes itself a **School of active Love** toward our neighbor [cf. *Dominicae Caenae*, ## 5-6].

2.] The Religious Community is a Communion in the world-wide Ecclesial Community. Gathered in Christ's Name, the religious communities have as their center the Eucharist, that sign of love, sign of unity, bond of Charity [cf. SC 47] - Pope Paul VI wrote [cf. ET 48].

e. The entire consecrated life can rightfully be thought of as a "**Eucharistic life**". **Consecration** possesses an intrinsic Eucharistic structure; the Council has interpreted this under the aspect of a strictly **oblatinal** dimension intimately ties to the **Eucharistic sacrifice** [cf. LG 45 c]. The **Apostolic** dimension of the religious life finds equally its **Eucharistic dynamism** as the precise point of reference: this brings to the fore the **Gift** that in the Eucharist Christ makes of Himself for the salvation of the world. Accentuating these aspects of the relationship between the Eucharist and the religious life, this has been the consistent teaching of the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Magisterium, by giving preference for the communitary dimension: it is the Eucharist that offers the possibility of making of community an authentic family in which unity is ever more fully achieved.

f. The religious Community has its own source in the Eucharist, and rediscovers there its own specific consistency and principle for a dynamic development of its own reason for being and its own *koinonia*. The Celebration of the Eucharist and the intense participation in it, are the font and summit of the contemplative dimension of every religious community [cf. LG 11]. These form its essential center and animating strength. Life in common, nourished by the doctrine of the Gospel, the Sacred Liturgy and above all of the Eucharist, help the religious to persevere in prayer and in Communion of the same Spirit [cf. Ac 2:42][PC 15].

g. In the light of these principles, there can be understood why there is repeatedly asked that there be in every religious house an oratory with the Blessed Sacrament reserved. The real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, devoutly kept and adored, will be the living sign of a communion that is built up every day in charity [cf. *Contemplative Dimension of the Religious Life*, March 1980, ## 8, 15]. In each religious community the conservation of the Eucharist expresses and achieves that which should be the principle mission of every religious family [cf. Paul VI, ET # 48].

3, **Confreres as 'Sacraments' of God's Love**

a. Members of the same communities are committed to the Word of God and to the Eucharist, as the prime mediation of God's love. In addition to listening to the Word of God, it is daily received eucharistically - to build up the *koinonia*, the result always of God's grace. This is a lived sharing in the life of the Most Blessed Trinity. When all living the same life are unanimous and harmonious, mutual honor is rendered to God. Each fellow human being - especially those of our own household - are sacraments of Jesus Christ for the believer.

b. The Mystery of the Incarnation is the source of the *sacramentality* of Jesus Christ - in union with the Divinity, and undergoing the Paschal Mystery - the sacramental life inserts the worshipper into the Trinity. The Prologue of Jn's Gospel presents the Incarnation as the Epiphany of God's Love, rendered present in this world. From that, Jesus promises: whoever sees Me, has seen the Father [cf. Jn 14:9]. Jesus prolongs this process of Incarnation toward all human beings. Christ **identifies Himself** with His Apostles, and then even to the least of His brothers and sisters [cf. Mt 10:40; Jn 13:20]. Whoever rejects those sent by Him, reject Christ Himself [cf. Lk

10:16] . Whoever accepts any disciple of Christ, accepts Christ Himself [cf. Lk 9:46-48]. In harming the Church, one harms Christ [cf. Ac 9:4, f.]. In Christ, we are all one [cf. Col 3:11] - we no longer are to live our own lives, but that of Christ living in us [cf. GA 2:20]. The Lord Jesus dwells within each one following Him [cf. Jn 6:56] - He **'remains'** there [cf. Jn 15:7] Jesus identifies Himself with anyone in need [cf. Mt 25:31-46].

c. The love for God is measured by one's love one's neighbor We have never seen God - but the Son in the bosom of the Father has revealed Him to us - if we love one another, God remains in us and His love is perfected in us [cf. Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 4:12]. The Lord reaches out to us, and allows us to reach Him in Jesus Christ - Who repeatedly asks us to look out for one another. The religious communion can never be just the result of social factors or the personal initiative of its members. It is both offered and willed by God. The Religious Community is in itself a theological reality, an object of contemplation: as a family united in the Name of the Lord. It is by its nature meant to be the place of the experience of God where He can be reached in a particular manner in His fullness in communicating with others [cf. ***Dominicae Caenae***, 15]. Achieving in this way the Trinitarian life, the community becomes united around Jesus Christ and is animated by the Holy Spirit, and it becomes a way to return to the Trinity. **Religious Life is born of the Trinity, and is a privileged way to return to It.**

5. All are immersed into the Trinitarian Dynamism

a. To share in the Life of the Trinity means to share in the very dynamism of Divine Love. The Mission of the Divine Son is shared in history as His eternal generation - just as the Mission of the Holy Spirit is prolonged and manifested His eternal *Spiration*. Vat. II wished to present **the Church as the prolongation of the divine processions of the Word and of the Spirit**, as a kind of 'historical' development of the Trinitarian mystery. The divine and eternal processions of the Son and of the Spirit appear as the conditions of possibility, the models and the eternal causes of the Church, as complements of the entire creation, called to be eternally integrated in them.

b. Receiving the same unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Church is, so to speak, generated with the Son and *spirated*, proceeding in love, with the Holy Spirit - they are both 'sent', proceed, from the Father. The Church can become the Sacrament of Salvation in so far as it is a mystery, bearing the fundamental mystery, that of **the redemptive Trinity**. Participation in the Trinitarian *koinonia* to which every Believer is called, is resolved in such a manner, in an even more profound ecclesial communion: with ever greater communion we are united with the Father, with the Word and with the Holy Spirit - with so much more intimate activity of Divine Love that the faithful can intensify their mutual fraternal relationships [cf. UR 7].

c. By the very fact that the ecclesial *koinonia* is rendered possible, the Trinitarian *koinonia* is both its model, and Source. When the Lord Jesus prays to His Father that all might be one as they are both one [cf. Jn 17:21, f.]. He opens up

unheard of horizons, that totally exceed human reasoning power. He is suggesting as possible a share in that same union of the children of God in truth and charity [cf. GS 24 c; UR 2 f]. The Church finds in the sublime Trinitarian *perichoresis*, **the dynamism of mutual indwelling**, the most sublime analogy of her own life of communion and the ultimate Model for the relationship among the faithful. The Unity of the Trinity appears as both the Source as well as the Model of Church unity.

d. It is necessary to contemplate the Trinitarian *perichoresis* to have some idea of what should be the **mutual knowledge** among us, that reciprocity of welcoming, of sharing, of love. Christ invites us all to believe in the relations of reciprocal "**in-existence**" [**in-habitation; in-dwelling**] between the Father and Himself so that we might be able to reach at the proper time to recognize them in the Vision - or, at least, in their mystical anticipation [cf. Jn 14:11, 20]. This occurs through the exercise of the mutual "in-existence" of the **unitive charity** among Christians, as between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [cf. Jn 17:21]. The exercise of the mutual "in-existence" on the created level, and that certain "**inter-subjective love**" constitutes in the NT the condition of the full unfolding, in Vision, of the perfect uncreated, mutual "in-existence" and divine inter-Subjectivity in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

e. The *perichoresis* of the Divine Persons is that reciprocal Self-donation and reception of One Another, which remains the archetype of our unity. However, as human persons, we cannot penetrate one another as the Divine Persons do. The participation of the divine life does bring it about that God can penetrate us to the extent of making us one in Him. The participation of His love renders possible that reciprocity of mutual love that penetrates us all. It is precisely this **mutual love that is the most perfect realization of the Trinitarian life** and of the **ecclesial life**. This is the great novelty achieved by the Paschal Mystery to which Christ calls us all: I give you a new commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you [cf. Jn 13:34; 15:12]. To love one another in Christ, with the same measure, is to live the Trinitarian love on earth, having been **in-grafted**, each one and all together into the Trinitarian life of the love of God Himself. Mutual love, therefore, is the life of the Trinitarian *perichoresis*, shared in by human beings. This is the only Law that regulates the relationships between the Persons in the Trinity. The New Commandment can, in fact, be considered as a kind of "translation", in human terms of the true meaning of the Trinitarian *perichoresis* and *koinonia*. This is meant to be the life of the Messianic People of the Church, the Icon of the Trinity [cf. LG 9 b].

f. The faithful are empowered in grace to live in their mutual relationships an existence that translates into history the very life of the Trinitarian *perichoresis*. As it is in heaven, so let it be on earth! Human beings, redeemed and divinized, can come to love others as Christ has - because in Him, **whoever loves, lives in Christ**. Their mutual love is divinized, it is Trinitarian. It is the Christ in me Who loves the Christ in others - this mutual love is the Love of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Between two who love each other this way, with the love of Christ, there is established the presence of a Third - analogously to what happens in the Most Holy Trinity, where the Father and the Son love each other in the Holy Spirit. The Third is also the Risen Christ, present in power and in the Light of His Spirit

g. This is what appears in the prayer directed by Christ toward His Father: I in them, and You in Me. In the Paschal Event, to which we have become sharers through the Word and the sacraments - we are introduced into the very same relationship of the love of the Son for His Father. This relationship with the Trinity permits then a second, that among Christians themselves: that they might be one, as You Father and I are One! As in the relationship between the Father and the individual Christian, it is the Christ Who becomes the Center and the realization, the Mediator of an ever deeper relationship of love between believers. It is Christ present in Christian Charity by grace, Who is the Principle of Love. In mutual love, it is the One Christ loving Himself!

h. Trinitarian Communion is the radical and constructive foundation of that communion among believers and is God Himself Who give s life to every Christian community. The Christian vocation becomes a vocation to unity. One Body, and one Spirit, as there is one hope to which we are all called , that of our vocation: there is one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. One God the Father of all, Who is above all, acts by means of all, and is present in all [cf. Ep 4:4-6]. We have been called into one Body [cf. Col 3:15]. The circulation of Grace between the Father, the Risen Christ and the Spirit of Pentecost, brings life to the Church as a divine reality and communicates to each believer the theological life. This makes possible and induces the communion among all believers, as brothers and sisters in the same family, witnesses to that **eschatological communion**, when the ecclesial community will be realized in the perfect communion, with that of the trinity. The Church appears thus as a sacrament or sign and instrument of intimate union with God and the unity of the entire human race [cf. LG 1].

i. Born within the Trinity, and sharing in the divine *agape'*, the Church is on its way toward the Trinity. To contemplate with deeper clarity the One and Triune God represents the goal toward which the Church wends her pilgrim way toward the Trinity [cf. LG 49]. The Religious Community wishes to take its place at the head of this pilgrim journey. Vat. II invites every religious, each consecrated person, to bring every care in persevering and excelling ever more in the vocation to which God has called each one, for an ever greater holiness of the Church and for the greater glory of the Trinity, that is One and Undivided. In Christ, and through Christ, He is the font and the horizon of all holiness [cf. LG 47].

j. God has not created us so that we would remain within the boundaries of nature - nor, so that we might live a solitary endeavor. He has created us so that we might be introduced into the very bosom of His Trinitarian Life. Jesus Christ has offered Himself in sacrifice so that we might all become one reality in this unity of the Divine Persons. There is a Place in which, from this earth, there begins this **Trinitarian reunion**. There is **a Family of God**, a mysterious extension of the Trinity in time, which not only prepares us for this unitary life and gives us a sure guarantee of it, and also makes us sharers in it. This is the sole society that is fully 'open' - this is the only one on the level of our intimate aspiration and in which we can attain finally to all our dimensions, aspirations. We are a people gathered in the unity of the Father

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit - this is the Church, full of the Trinity. The Church - and within her, the religious community - thus finds her own origin in the Trinity: it is structured according to this Trinitarian image of God, and is tending inexorably forward toward the Trinitarian fulfillment of history. The Trinity **in -forms** all of life, articulates its structures, and awaits its achievements.

§§§

3. St. Gaspar Bertoni

a. Ignatian Influence

[1] As has been noted in the Ignatian Constitutions, that which helps for the union of hearts may be divided into three possibilities:

- **On the Part of the Members themselves [cf. CSJ nn. 657-665]:** there has to be a very careful selection regarding entrance and promotion [nn. 657, f.]. There is much insistence on obedience [nn. 659-660] and upon subordination [nn. 662-663] - under this heading ensues the rather long and complicated legislation regarding the **Collateral** Confrere [cf. nn. 659-661].

- **On the Part of Superiors [cf. CSJ nn. 666-670]:** here there is the discussion of the qualities of the Superior General [nn. 666, f.], his influence [n. 666] and his residence [nn. 668-670].

- **On the Part of Both [cf. CSJ nn. 671-676]:** here these main points are discussed: **union with God** [nn. 671 a]; **uniformity** [671 b] and **communication** [nn. 673-676]¹⁸⁸.

[2] The Jesuit interpreters list these four basic means for the realization of this union of Charity :

- **The Love of God, our Lord** [cf. CSJ n. 671]: more than thinking of this as a Pelagian exercise of virtue on the part of the membership, St. Ignatius stresses much more this love as a gift of God. Only in God does one encounter the ultimate Font of Love - and this alone is meant to be the central factor of union - particularly that charity of hearts and minds. The ultimate inspiration for the Ignatian Mission seems to be this expression from St. John: ***As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you. Remain in My love... What I command you is to love one another*** [cf. Jn 15:9, 17]. Such Divine Love can only be received when one corresponds to the abundant graces to live it with his fellow human beings. Much of what Ignatius wrote here could be of benefit to segments of the Church today:

...For when the Superior and the subjects are closely united to His Divine and Supreme Goodness, they will very easily be united among themselves, through that same love which will descend from the Divine

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Antonio M. deAldama, SJ, *Unir a los repartidos. Comentario a la octava parte de la Constituciones de la Compania de Jesus*. Roma: Centrum Ignatianum pp. 3-96, *passim*.

Goodness and spread to all other men, particularly into the body of the Society. Thus, from both sides charity will come to further this union between superiors and subjects and in general all goodness and virtues through which one proceeds in conformity with the spirit. Consequently, there will also come total contempt of temporal things, in regard to self love, the chief enemy of this union and universal good, frequently induces disorder.

Still another great help can be found in uniformity, both interior uniformity of doctrine, judgments and wills, as far as is possible, and exterior uniformity in respect to clothing, ceremonies of the Mass, and other such matters, to the extent that the different qualities of persons, places, and the like, permit. [cf. CSJ, n. 671].

- Obedience and the Exercise of Authority: this dash of reality is also needed for union of hearts. With the **Fourth Vow** in the Ignatian legislation, it is no small wonder that the Jesuit Founder would apply most of his attention in his c. 1 of Part VIII. The unity that the Saint looked for in his varied apostolic mission is not only among the members - but also between the membership and the Head of the Society, Province, House. Without the Head, the body simply cannot function. The Saint seems to give this the primordial role, the decisive emphasis is assuring union also through the exercise of authority. Thus, for him, obedience and the legitimate exercise of authority are authentic factors in Ignatian union:

...Since this union is produced in great part by the bond of obedience, this virtue should always be maintained in its vigor; and those who are sent out from the houses to labor in the Lord's field should, as far as possible, be persons practiced in this virtue. Those who are more important in the Society should give a good example of obedience to the others, by being closely united to their own superior and by obeying him promptly, humbly and devoutly.... [cf. CSJ, n. 659].

St. Ignatius had a rather unusual juridical structure known as the ***Collateral***, a person sent to assist the superior - but, this complicated addition fell into disuse, other than in the endurance of the Superiors' ***Admonitor***.

In this Ignatian ideal, the minds and hearts of the Jesuits are meant to be profoundly united in their fulfillment of the **arduous and difficult vocation** of balancing a varied missionary life, flowing out of their intense union with God, and with one another

- Communication: this is the third means brought to the fore by Ignatius for the union of the Company of Jesus. There are extensive rules for communications between the 'center' and the membership - and on all levels of superiors. There were meant to be letters of 'business' as well as those of edification. [cf. CSJ nn. 668, ff.]. The evolution of the rapid means of modern communication has drastically changed this section, and simplified it greatly.

- **Uniformity:** excessive diversity is never the friend of unity. Thus, Part VIII proposes the theme of even exterior harmony. Yet, the Ignatian Constitutions remain quite flexible - and this plays right into today's emphasis on **inculturation**. In which the genius of each nation and culture is taken into consideration.

- **Interior Uniformity** is a recurring theme in the Ignatian Rule:

As far as possible, we should all think alike and speak alike, in conformity with the Apostle's teaching [Ph 2:2]; and differing doctrines ought not to be permitted, either orally in sermons or public lectures, or in books; [and it will not be permissible to publish books without the approval and permission of the superior general, who will entrust the examination of them to at least three persons of sound doctrine and clear judgment about the field in question]. Even in regards to things which are to be done, diversity, which is generally the mother of discord and the enemy of union of wills, should be avoided as far as possible. This union and agreement among them all ought to be sought with great care and the opposite ought not to be permitted, in order that, being united among themselves by the bond of fraternal charity, they may be able better and more efficaciously to apply themselves in the service of God and the aid of their fellowmen... [cf. CSJ n. 273].

... The doctrine which the scholastics ought to follow in each branch should be that which is safer and more approved, as also the authors who teach it. The rectors will take care of this, by conforming themselves to what is decided in the Society as a whole for the greater glory of God ... [cf. CSJ n. 358]

... In general, as was stated in the treatise on the colleges [n. 358], in each faculty those books will be lectured on which are found to contain more solid and safe doctrine; and those which are suspect, or whose authors are suspect, will not be taken up. But, in each university these should be individually designated.

In theology there should be lectures on the Old and New Testaments, and on the scholastic doctrine of St. Thomas, and in positive theology those authors should be selected who are more suitable for our end... [cf. CSJ n. 464].

...Whatever helps toward the union of the members of this Society among themselves and with their head will also help much toward preserving the well-being of the Society. This is especially the case with the bond of wills, which is the mutual charity and love they have for one another. This bond is strengthened by their getting information and news from one another, and by having much intercommunication, by their following one same doctrine, and by their being uniform in everything as far as possible, and above all by the link of obedience, which unites the individuals with their superiors, and the local superiors

among themselves and with the provincials, and both the local superiors and provincials with the general, in such a way that the subordination of some to others is diligently preserved... [cf. CSJ n. 821].

- **Exterior Uniformity** ¹⁸⁹:almost naturally here there would be suggested an objection from the fact that there was 'no specific Jesuit habit':

... Although there is no specified habit, it will be left to the prudence of the one in charge of the house to decide whether he will allow the novices to go about in the same apparel which they brought from the world or oblige them to make a change; or again, when the garments become worn, whether he will give to the Novices others more suitable for their own needs and for their service of the house... [cf. CSJ n. 19; cf. also nn. 296, 577, etc.].

The main guide-line in this matter, as is well known, is: ***...et in iis, quae ad victum et vestitum et caetera exteriora pertinent, honestorum sacerdotum communem et approbatum usum sequantur...*** [**Formula n. 8**]. This proved to be a hard rule to apply across the board: - there simply was no uniformity in clerical dress for some time. The city of Rome served as a case in point: with the many priests, the majority dressed as they did in their native lands. Eventually, the Jesuits chose a uniform way of dress

The customs of **diocesan priests** [***honestas clericalis***] were also assumed by Jesuits when it came to lodging. Prior to the Missal of Pius Vth [1570], there was enormous diversity in the celebration of Mass. Eventually, the 'Roman customs' were imposed by the Dominican Pontiff. This had already appealed to Ignatius:

... First of all, those who in the judgment of the superior should be ordained are to be taught how to say Mass not only with interior understanding and devotion, but also with an exterior manner good for the edification of those who hear the Mass. All the members of the Society should as far as possible use the same uniform ceremonies by conforming themselves in them, as far as the diversity of regions permits, to the Roman usage as the one which is more universal and embraced in a special way by the Roman See... [cf. CSJ n. 401].

With Ignatius' frequent use of : **as far as possible**, the legislator shows that absolute uniformity just was not possible - more than 20 times over he adds the phrase: ***particular circumstances*** [nn.. 508, 581, 747] - ***the diversity of persons and constitutions*** [n. 301], ***places and persons*** [nn.395, 458, 462, 671, 746] - ***of times, places and persons*** [nn. 64, 66, 71, 136, 211, 238, 343, 351, 382, 455] - all

¹⁸⁹ Cf. also Antonio M. deAldama,SJ, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Union among Jesuits.* St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1998, 'General Introduction', and pp. 5-48, *passim*.

must be taken into consideration. There is **throughout, a marvelous openness in ministerial choices as well** as in so many particulars, not considered vital, to meet these, **all for the greater glory of God and the broader good for souls.**

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b. St. Gaspar Bertoni's Part Ten
Preface
Harmony among the Confreres
[CF ## 187-190]

This Part X provides Fr. Bertoni with the possibility of offering the biblical background for charity within the Congregation. There is clearly a logic and an order to these texts:

CF # 187: Christ's Own Charity: the Stigmatine Founder's central biblical text here is **Jn 13:35**: this is the "New Commandment": ***By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.*** This is the same love that Christ has for His Apostles - the same love that the Father has for Christ, and He for the Father. This indicates once more the **Trinitarian/Christological** dimensions of the Stigmatine Founder's Charism. This is the challenge to cooperate with this infused charity within the Community.

The text calls this '**Spirit of the Stigmatine Vocation**' the gift of God's love, and challenges a response to it to be the sign and the identification [a kind of ***carta di identita'***] of all Christians - and of each Apostolic Missionary in his unique role in community living. This is the ***tessera*** of admittance and membership, the "counter-sign". However, Fr. Bertoni also calls this authentic fraternal love the **scopus** of the Congregation. Perhaps in theological terms, here in **CF # 187**, the word is used to designate the **General** End, or Purpose of the Community. In the very important **CF # 185**, the more specific purpose of the Institute is described in these well known terms: ***Cum ejusdem Sodalitatis scopus sit, Ecclesiae sub Episcoporum directione obsequium praestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera....*** This would seem to indicate that the multiple Apostolic Mission needs to be carried out in the same way that Christ has loved us [cf. **Jn 13: 34**].

As for the actual wording of this text, the Stigmatine scholar, Fr. Stofella, suggests in the footnote here the usual Suarez [Book I, c. 4]. In this First Book of his ***magnum opus***, Fr. Suarez asks the question regarding the Institution of the Company of Jesus and discusses it as an "**Institute**". In his Chapter IV, he asks whether the Society was properly established and approved. In nn. 7, ff., he enumerates the effects of the founding the Society ¹⁹⁰:

- **first** he indicates the sanctity and innocence of life of the first generation Jesuits;

¹⁹⁰ o.c. pp. 578 b, ff.

- **second**, this same virtue and purity were manifest also in their successors, and the Jesuit theologian remarks: ‘Principally this religious family shone forth and was always held in admiration by all, because of their fraternal union and charity, and we might apply to them this word given to us by Christ: *By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another*[cf. Jn 13:35]¹⁹¹;
- **third**, the solidity and stability of the community;
- **fourth**, the incredible propagation and extension of the institute;
- **fifth**, its many martyrs;
- **sixth**, its great service to its neighbors and the universal Church. Suarez goes on to say that this could only be the work of the Holy Spirit, and concludes that no such work of piety could be begun and brought to some completion without the Holy Spirit, citing **Ph 1:6**, a text often used by Fr. Bertoni ¹⁹².

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CF # 188: One’s Own Domestics in the Faith: here the setting is the “Order of Charity” - later, Fr. Bertoni will show that since charity is “most ordered”, the first Stigmatine work is his fellow Stigmatines ¹⁹³. This is based on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians: *...Therefore, while we still have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith* - [cf. **Ga 6:10: Ergo, dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum ad omnes, maxime autem ad domesticos fidei.**]. The Stigmatine Founder continues, then, with this other citation from the First Letter to Timothy: *But if any man not have care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel* [cf. **1 Tm 5:8 - Si quis autem suorum et maxime domesticorum curam non habet, fidem negavit et est infideli deterior**].

Fr. Bertoni derived his regulations regarding the order of charity from Suarez, **Book VIII, Chapter VII: Concerning the Negative Means that the Society uses for the Spiritual Development and Perfection of its own Religious, Chapter VIII: Concerning the Positive Means, or those which consist in Action** ¹⁹⁴. Here, Suarez speaks of the ‘last’ [ultimate?] means of developing fraternal charity - and also, that zeal with which the members work together for the salvation of externs. The Jesuit theologian reasons that the very end, and the ministries of the Society both supremely require this union, and also assist its achievement in an excellent manner. His text continues - and this will be our **CF ## 262, 263**, from the concluding c. 9 of Fr. Bertoni’s Section II, on the Positive Means for achieving charity, of Part X:

¹⁹¹ cf. top of p. 579 a: Other than the use of this text, Jn 13:35, no other similarities have been found so far in Fr. Bertoni - such as the use of the tell-tale expressions *scopum et tesseram*.

¹⁹² Cf. again CF # 185.

¹⁹³ Cf. CF ## 262, 263.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. o.c., p. 962 a.

For the end of the Society is to procure the salvation of souls; as a result it begs ministries that are accommodated to this end. Therefore, flowing from this it is required that each one ought primarily and with greater dedication work for and desire the salvation of his own brothers, even before that of externs, because charity is most ordered. Since just as each one inclines first to his own spiritual salvation over that of others, so also among these 'others', he intends and seeks for the spiritual salvation of his spiritual brothers, and of the entire body of the Society [Sodality], even before that of externs.

Therefore, there should arise that supreme care and diligence which the Prelates of the Society [Superiors of the Sodality] ought to have regarding the spiritual advancement of their sons.

As has been seen throughout the Constitutions of the Stigmatine Founder, there is constant interest in the on-going intellectual development and spiritual formation ¹⁹⁵.

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CF # 188: The Ideal of the Apostolic Church: here the ideal of the Early Church, constantly striving to live the model, based on the behavior of the Apostles around Christ: they had one heart and one soul - Fr. Bertoni in a general manner, quotes **Ac 3 and 4**, but specifically cites **Ac 2: 45, ff.; 4:32, 33, the *Summaries***.

- **Ac 3 & 4**: These two Chapters are included in that portion which deals with the Jerusalem Mission: there is included the Cure of the Lame Man [*I have neither silver nor gold...*]; Peter's address to the People; Peter and John before the Sanhedrin ; the Apostles' Prayer under Persecution; the ideal of the early Christian Community and the Generosity of Barnabas, *the Son of Encouragement*.

- **'Summaries' of the early Church**: cf. **Ac 2:42-47; 4:32-35** [and a third one [cf. Ac 5:12-16] that does not enter here. The pertinent lines are as follows:

And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of the bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: many wonders and signs were done by the apostles in Jerusalem, and there was great fear in all. And all they who believed, were together, and had all things in common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as everyone had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart. Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved. [cf. Ac 2:42-47].

¹⁹⁵ cf. Part IV, CF ## 47-68.

And the multitude of believers had but one heart and soul: neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own; but all things were common unto them. And with great power did the apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord; and great grace was in them all. For neither was there any one needy among them. For as many as were owners of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold. [cf. Ac 4:32-35].

Fr. Bertoni's **CF # 189** seems to be a synthesis of all this - the underlined portions are a combination of these texts as can readily be seen. There is some hint of this in Suarez ¹⁹⁶ - but, the words of introduction have not been found yet. The order of the combination of the various texts of *Acts* is taken *verbatim* from Suarez here. For the Constitution that follows there is only the text of **Ps 132, verse 1**.

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CF # 190: The Joys of Common Life: *O quam bonum et jucundum...!* : [cf. Ps 132]: *Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together...!* This is the ideal of the early Church and the goal of Fr. Bertoni's legislation. His emphasis on Common Life is far more pronounced than that of St. Ignatius. For the Jesuit Founder, the members of the Society of Jesus are called to be ***Friends in the Lord, United for Dispersion*** ¹⁹⁷, directed by a "***Prepositus*** General" and Fr. Bertoni's emphasis seems to be more "***Brothers***" gathered for Mission, under the "***Father***" General.

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SECOND SECTION

The Positive Means CF cc. 1-9, ## 221-266]

Premise:

This entire Second Section, is taken from **Suarez' Chapter VIII**, from his **Book VIII**, and contains **nn. 1-22**, and some 14 columns of his text ¹⁹⁸. These are the Positive Means by which Fraternal Charity is conciliated within the Society. For Suarez, these are the **internal** means so that each confrere will be united in Jesus Christ. For this to happen, there is needed **Prayer** - and then, the consideration on the part of each confrere of the **gifts present in others**. This will lead the study, then, to take up **other means**, which do not consist in any prohibition, but much more in **action to be undertaken**, and which are oriented to conciliating fraternal charity to the same end. These means are partly **internal** [c. 1, **CF ## 221-223** which will be considered first], and then certain **external** means [cf. cc. 2, ff., **CF ## 224, ff.**].

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¹⁹⁶ o.c., p. 948 b

¹⁹⁷ Javier Osuna, SJ, *Amigos en el Señor. Unidos para la dispersion.* Bilbao: Mensajero-SalTerrae

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 954 a - 962 b, top.

c. 1: The Interior Inclination, or Disposition of Soul
[CF ## 221-223]

CF # 221: The inspiration for this section is based to some extent on Constitutions such as the following from St. Ignatius - an aspect of his **Trinitarian inspiration**:

The chief bond to cement the union of the members among themselves and with their head is, on both sides, the love of God, our Lord. For when the superior and the subjects are closely united to His Divine and Supreme Goodness, they will very easily be united among themselves, through that same love which will descend from the Divine Goodness and spread to all other men, and particularly into the body of the Society. Thus, from both sides charity will come to further this union between superiors and subjects, and in general all goodness and virtues through which one proceeds in conformity with the Spirit. Consequently there will also come total contempt of temporal things, in regard to which self-love, the chief enemy of this union and universal good, frequently induces disorder.

Still another great help can be found in uniformity, both interior uniformity of doctrine, judgments and wills, as far as this is possible, and exterior uniformity in respect to clothing, ceremonies of the Mass, and other such matters, to the extent that the different qualities of persons, places and the like, permit. [cf. CSJ n. 671].

Fr. Bertoni's Constitution is copied from Suarez: 'First, this depends most particularly on **spiritual progress**, by which true charity or that love toward God and Christ the Lord enjoys some increase, that very union between confreres, from which individuals are united to God and our Savior, is increased and perfected.'

There will be noted here once more the insistence upon the spiritual increase that permeates so much for the Founder's Constitutions ¹⁹⁹.

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CF # 222: 'Hence, because the bond of this union greatly increases **by prayer and meditation**, according to **Psalm 38:4: ...in my meditation a fire shall flame out**. Therefore, without any doubt this is a more certain and solid path to obtaining this union.'

The ideal of prayer and meditation recurs often in Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions: **CF ## 47; 110; 127**].

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CF # 223: To present this remarkable number, Suarez quotes St. Ignatius' Constitution n. 250, from early in his Part III:

...In everything, they should try and desire to give the advantage to the others, esteeming them all in their hearts as better than themselves [Ph

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Compendium Rude, CF # 6; Part IV, c., 1, of Founder's Constitutions - CF ## 47-48.

2:3], and showing exteriorly, in an unassuming and simple religious manner, the respect and reverence befitting each one's state, in such a manner that by observing one another, they grow in devotion, and praise God our Lord, whom each one should endeavor to recognize in his neighbor as in His image. [CSJ, n. 250].

Suarez indicates in his own commentary that this rule seems to have been taken from Augustine's Rule 5, which will be presented here in its third number, and is perfect for this present matter:

'For indeed nothing moves one toward that love of genuine charity for another than for us to take note of those singular ornaments of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit in him, and that we contemplate him as an image of God depicted with the most excellent colors of grace. If therefore, all strive to increase within themselves in those virtues and graces, and that they frequently reflect on these in others, and that they come to consider that these are superior to ourselves, and to rejoice in those spiritual goods of others, and to thank God for them, then in a marvelous manner will mutual charity increase among them.

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**c. 2: Those Exterior Realities which generally serve Charity the more
[CF ## 224-226]**

These first three Constitutions of this Positive section are taken almost *verbatim*, from Suarez, n. 1, as has been seen - with a few additions. For this Chapter 2, we begin to take up n. 2 in this text, entitled: "Some of the External Realities, partly General, such as Obedience, Poverty, etc." ²⁰⁰. So it is that some of these external means are general, and these pertain to the virtues. Of this type is that which is said of obedience in the VIIIth Part of the Ignatian Constitutions:

CF # 224: Union of this kind is produced in great part by the bond of obedience..., says St. Ignatius [CSJ, n. 659]. So, this Constitution is one of those rare direct citations from St. Ignatius.

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CF # 225: A similar means is that of poverty and humility²⁰¹, or the contempt of temporal things. Here, CSJ, n. 671 is quoted: Among these temporal goods, must be considered honors and dignities, as well as riches and bodily comforts: the contempt for the former, no less than for the latter goods, flows from charity toward God: **for just as the poor in spirit and the humble manifest honor to all, so they are received by all in the depths of their hearts ²⁰².**

²⁰⁰ Cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 955 a & b.

²⁰¹ Words added by Fr. Bertoni

²⁰² NB: these words of Fr. Bertoni are not found here in the Suarez text, p. 955 b: pauperes etiam spiritu et humiles sicut omnibus honorem exhibent, ita ab omnibus corde intimo recipiuntur. Suarez does refer, though, just above to CSJ, n. 671. [Cf. also CF ## 120 121].

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CF # 226: A characteristic means, however, is that of poverty, in that this is most proper to the religious state by reason of the vow, as is magnificently taught by Basil, who says: 'Wherever all is held in common, hearts and minds and bodies, and we make use of all that is necessary for sustenance and the way of life: then God is common to all, the exercises of piety are held in common, and the chores are equally shared, etc. [Const. Mon. c.19]. The same is maintained by Cassian, quoting **Ac 4:32: *They had but one heart and one soul***: and immediately thereafter he adds: ***but all things were common unto them***' [Coll. 16, c. 6].

What is important here, too, is **Ac 4:32** - and Fr. Bertoni emphasizes this ideal repeatedly [cf. **CF ## 94; 98; 189; 196; 216; 232**].

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**c. 3: The Exterior Realities which in a Special Manner serve Charity,
among which stands out Uniformity in Life-Style
[CF ## 227-229]**

CF # 227: At the outset of this chapter, there is to be shown the special means of preserving charity:

Uniformity and conformity are to be maintained in all matters, even in externals as in clothing, food, and every manner of living: for similitude is a cause of love; and this uniformity of life, as common accord, greatly helps the unity of spirits.

This is an ideal important to Fr. Bertoni [cf. **CF ## 91; 97; 98**].

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CF # 228: Hence, Augustine points out: 'All will unanimously and harmoniously **live**²⁰³ together'. This is as though he were saying in order that all would live together in harmony, it is necessary that they **live** together in unanimity. And he adds: 'Honor God in each other, Whose temples you have become.' Because it is God alone 'Who makes brothers live together in one home'. So, this uniformity greatly contributes to God being recognized in all, and as a consequence, that all would be most intimately united in God.

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CF # 229: This is the reason for the common table, [*which indeed truly is common in the Society*]²⁰⁴, so that no one, no matter how important, or what level of seniority he may have achieved, whether he be a superior, or more learned, or enjoy any other distinction, will be excused from this common table, other than for reasons of illness²⁰⁵. Thus, St. John Chrysostom sublimely commends that community of ancient Monks, where he states: 'They have everything in common, table, dwelling, clothing, and what is indeed wonderful is that indeed there is one and the same spirit

²⁰³ **NB:** there seems to be a discrepancy here: in Fr. Stofella's text, he twice repeats the verb *iuvent* whereas in the Suarez text - [p. 955 b] - the verb repeated is *vivant*.

²⁰⁴ **NB:** the words italicized and in brackets are not included in Fr. Bertoni's text.

²⁰⁵ Here there is included a lengthy text, translated on the next page, not found in Fr. Bertoni's text - cf. Suarez, pp. 955 b-956a. Fr. Bertoni insists on the only exception being illness [cf. also **CF ## 215, 217**]

in all' [Book 3, Against those criticizing the monastic life]. This indicates that external unity is greatly conducive to this unity of souls.

It needs to be pointed out here that Fr. Bertoni simply eliminates nine lines here where the Jesuit tradition made exceptions for the Father General. Suarez' rather lengthy text reads here:

[...the Father General is the sole exception to this rule. Because of the heavy weight of his duties, and other causes, this exception was conceded in the IIIrd General Congregation, chapter 5. Then, in the VIIth General Congregation, Decree 7, there was commended that practice developing among the Generals that they not partake of this private table, as they were abstaining from it...].

Throughout his Constitutions Fr. Bertoni shows a recurring concern for mortification: [cf. **CF ## 43, 44, 94, 112, 128-137, 156, 229-233**].

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**c. 4: On the Manner of Food and the Common Table
[CF ## 230-233]**

CF # 230: This is taken from Suarez' "n. 4", in what way is the food, or table called 'common' ²⁰⁶. The principle the Jesuit theologian lays down becomes, then, Fr. Bertoni's Constitution:

The table is said to be common not only regarding place and time, but most especially in the use of food. For the same must be served to all without any singularity. St. John Chrysostom speaking of religious concerning this [Hom 58, to the People] says: 'The fare should be the same for those served as well as for those serving, the same clothing, the same dwelling, the same life. And what wonder would there be, he adds, that there be one diet, clothing and table for all, because there is one soul among all?'

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CF # 231: For this reason, also every singularity in the common table is to be avoided, because this would greatly offend the spirits of the weak, and consequently upset charity. As Bernard so expertly points out [**Serm. 30 in Cant.**].

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CF # 232: However, this should not impede, [as I stated in a similar context in the preceding Chapter, n. 17] that the necessities of all should be met with proportion, according to this from **Ac 4:35:** ' ***And distribution was made to every one, according as he had need.***' For this is precisely what charity desires.

This is often a concern for Fr. Bertoni [cf. **CF ## 189; 196; 226; 257**].

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CF # 233: Thus, Benedict legislates in his Rule [c. 34]: We do not say that there be acceptance of persons in this, [which may God forbid], but a special

²⁰⁶ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 956 a, top. Much emphasized by Fr. Bertoni - cf. **CF ## 91; 94; 97; 98**].

consideration is to be had for the infirmities of each one. Therefore, let him who needs less thank God for this and not be saddened. Whoever needs more, let him accept his infirmity with humility, and not be arrogant over the consideration shown to him. And thus all the members will be in peace.

Fr. Bertoni notes similar ideals also elsewhere [cf. **CF ## 229; 234, ff.**].

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C. 5: On the Care of the Sick and the Infirm [CF ## 234-242]

To conclude his 'n. 4', Suarez adds about 7 lines from the 7th Chapter of Augustine's Rule, which Fr. Bertoni does not use. Suarez then introduces his 'n. 5', 'concerning the second principal means for mutual charity, the care of the sick. For this ancient monastic ideal, Suarez relies heavily on Sts. Basil, Augustine and Jerome, as well as Pachomius. The Jesuit theologian notes that all religious communities are outstanding in this, and it is something that all Founders commend very much. The subsequent Constitution picks up with the quote of the great Cappadocian:

CF # 234: 'St. Basil [in c. 19, of Constit. Mon.] where he treats of the cenobitic life, points out that whoever is suffering from bodily infirmity, discovers many willing souls who will share his weaknesses. And he who is truly sick in spirit and is afflicted, finds many at hand, by whom he will be cared for, and by whom each day, he is lifted up.' The meaning here is that under the ideal of the care for the ailing, all works of mercy are included, through which brothers come to one another's assistance: sometimes this is achieved by caring for the sick, at other times by consoling the afflicted, and also at times by assisting the heavily burdened; and then also by comforting those who are wavering, or by correcting the fallen, and raising them up.

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CF # 235: The same Saint [in his Moral Rules, 41, c. 2] very much commends gentleness and kindness towards the sick.

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CF # 236: Again the same Saint [in his Brief Rules, 159] states that all must minister unto the sick 'as brothers of the Lord'. And in an excellent manner St. Benedict [Rule c. 36] legislates: 'The care of the sick is to be taken care of before all else and above all else, and the brothers will serve them **as though Christ Himself.**'

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CF # 237: 'Once again St. Benedict states [infr.]: 'The Abbot should take particular care that those who are ill should suffer no neglect.' Pope Innocent III has confirmed this [in his c. entitled, *Cum ad monasterium*, in **De Statu monachorum**]. S. Pachomius provided for the same situation in his Rule [c. 20, 22, 23], where these words are to be noted: 'They will give to the sick everything in abundance, so that the ailing brother may not experience any sadness.' This is in complete agreement with what Jerome refers regarding the Egyptian monks [in his Proem. to that rule]: 'Those ailing will be supported with wonderful service, and with well prepared meals in abundance.'

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CF # 238: this Constitution follows in Suarez' 'n. 6', with the surprising: 'Even feigned illness should not be denied such care ²⁰⁷.' The Jesuit theologian notes that he does not find any such legislation in the Rule of St. Francis of Assisi, but the spirit of this may be found in ideal, as the Seraphic Doctor copiously declared:

'St. Bonaventure [in his Book de sex alis Seraph., c. 4, tom 2, Opus.] points out in an excellent manner that there should not be denied to any of the Friars even when certain ones, either out of their imagination, or out of deception might sometimes be deceptive. It is much better to offer assistance to all, so that those who are genuine and those truly in need, might not suffer any harm.'

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CF # 239: this next Constitution follows for Fr. Bertoni right on the heels of the preceding, beginning with the very next sentence in the text of Suarez:

'And therefore also the Divine Augustine prudently legislated [Rule 28]: If the suffering is not manifest in the body of the confrere saying that he is in discomfort, he is to be believed beyond any doubt. However, regarding what he would request for the care of his pain which he would like to experience, let the doctor be consulted.'

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CF # 240: this Constitution is introduced in Suarez' text with the observation that this rule was confirmed in the Council of Aquisgran., c. 42, under Emperor Ludovicus, for the Clerics, or Canons regular.

' Likewise Lupus in the Rule of the Monks [taken from St. Jerome, c. pen.], states: When anyone begins to come down with an illness, he is to be removed from his cell to a larger place, and be so comforted by the ministry of the elder members, so that he might not yearn for the delights of city life, or the affection of his mother ²⁰⁸.

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CF # 241: this legislation regarding the Infirmarian, Suarez refers back to the Jesuit Constitutions:

It is good to have in the house someone who superintends what pertains to the preservation of health for those who have it, especially for those who are weaker because of age, or other causes, and to its restoration in the case of the sick. If these feel more than ordinarily indisposed, they are obliged to tell him, that a suitable remedy may be provided as charity requires [CSJ, n. 303].

Great care should be taken of the sick. Their illness should be reported to the infirmarian, and if he judges it to be of moment he should inform

²⁰⁷ o.c., p. 956 b.

²⁰⁸ cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 956, bottom - 957 b, top.

the superior and a physician, unless the superior thinks otherwise in particular cases. Furthermore, his order should be followed, as far as possible, in regard to the regimen and the medicines, without the sick man intruding himself in anything other than in exercising his patience and obedience by leaving the care of everything else to the superior and his ministers, by means of whom Divine Providence directs him... [CSJ, n. 304]²⁰⁹.

The actual wording of this text of Fr. Bertoni is not found explicitly in Suarez, but seems to summarize what has been presented:

'In addition to the care given by the Superiors, and the ministration of the Infirmarian, there should be someone in each house assigned to the particular office of taking care of the community health.'

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CF # 242: this particular Constitution is found in Suarez in the Franciscan Rule, and in the Jesuit Summary of the Constitutions, § 46: 'Superiors should be informed regarding whatever may be necessary for one's health, so that perhaps the brethren should not suffer the lack of anything that may be necessary for them, on account of such ignorance.'

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c. 6. The Hospitality to be extended to the Confreres

[CF ## 243-249]

For this new Chapter in his Constitutions, Fr. Bertoni from nn. 8 and 9 of the text from Suarez: "The Third Means, Hospitality toward the Brethren" - and "This aforementioned Hospitality is to be shown by Signs of Benevolence"²¹⁰. Suarez offers CSJ nn. 330 and 559:

...However, they may make expenditures in favor of all those who advance the work of these colleges, as, for example, when some members are administrators, preachers, lecturers, confessors, visitors, and other professed or similar persons who further the spiritual or temporal welfare of those colleges...[CSJ n. 303].

...the fact that the colleges supply certain expenditures which the houses would otherwise make if they could, for example, expenditures for clothing and the giving of provisions for traveling to those who are sent from the houses to the colleges, even though it seems to be an aid to the house, is not against the intention of the constitution which states that these members should not avail themselves of the fixed revenues of the colleges for their food or clothing, or other expenses which are proper to the house...[cf. CSJ n. 559].

²⁰⁹ These Constitutions are near the end of Ignatius' Part III, "The Preservation and Progress of those in Formation."

²¹⁰ Cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 957 a & b.

It is after quoting these two Ignatian principles that Suarez offers his text which Fr. Bertoni then took for his Constitutions:

CF # 243: this first Constitution of c. 6 on hospitality is Fr. Bertoni's paraphrase of Suarez' text:

If any of the brothers, or confreres, should come to our houses from any place whatever, hospitality is to be extended with all signs and works of benevolence and charity.

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CF # 244: Fr. Bertoni changes the subsequent Suarez text ²¹¹ from indirect Latin discourse to a direct statement:

'Not only should our pilgrims, or guests be treated in a most human manner, for as long as they remain in our place, but they should also be provided with food and clothing, should they stand in need of these. This cannot be considered contrary to poverty, should it seem necessary for charity.'

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CF # 245: This is to be extended to all the confreres, without any distinction of nationality or race, without any acceptance, or limitation of persons, whether they are professed, or novices, whether they are healthy, or sick; whether they are well known, or not, and to all, every sign of charity is to be manifested.'

The diversity of races and nationalities seems clear here [cf. **CF ## 188; 214; 215; 217; 229**]. – a rather clear indication of Fr. Bertoni's geographical abandonment, found in the word *quocumque* in the **Diocese and World [cf. CF # 5]**.

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CF # 246: In his subsequent 'n. 9' ²¹², Suarez notes that this hospitality is not only 'affective' - but, must also be 'effective': 'This afore-mentioned hospitality is to be shown with signs of benevolence':

'Moreover, this charity is to be shown in the first place in welcoming guests. This should be done with external signs of the greatest friendship, such as are usually manifested in accord with the customs of the region, as among distinguished persons and their closest of friends, and as also among relatives.'

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CF # 247: before the wording of this next Constitution is taken up, Suarez includes an old enjoinder, which would be quite familiar to the Stigmatine aspirants of old: no one should touch another, even in gest ²¹³. Only those gestures should be retained as are in vogue among religious, whose gravity and modesty are retained. An embrace in this sense might also nourish this bond as a sign of charity. This is the so-called Rule 30 of the Common Rules. Fr. Bertoni then copies the next passage:

²¹¹ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 957 b.

²¹² l.c., p. 957 b

²¹³ This is the old *Rule 122*, from the "Red Rulebook" for aspirants.

‘Therefore, this charity is to make use not only of signs but even more with all the works of mercy and humility. This is to be accomplished without sparing any effort, or expense, in so far as religious poverty would allow, and the need of our brother might request.

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CF # 248: then follows a challenging quote from Chrysostom: **all** are from the number of those ministering unto others, and each one will wash the feet of guests, and let there even be rivalry to do this, and let this be done without examining whether the guest is a freed man, or slave, but let this ministry be rendered to each one. In the community, no one is great - and no one is small. The Benedictine Rule is quoted [c. 53] where this attitude should be manifested toward all, but most especially toward one’s own brothers. The Suarez begins his ‘n. 10’²¹⁴, entitled, ‘in this hospitality there should be some frugality.’ Next follows St. Basil’s c. 20 which St. Gaspar Bertoni copied:

‘St. Basil maintains the same [in Reg. Fusior. c. 20], where nonetheless, he does commend much in this regard but holds that religious modesty and poverty should not be exceeded in sharing with guests. He says what have we to do with sumptuous appurtenances? When some guest comes to us: if he is one of our confreres and has the same institution of life as we do, he should be able to recognize its domestic fare. So, whatever it is he has left at home, he should be able to find it among us. Is he wearied by the journey? In that case, we provide more abundantly and liberally than usual, provided that it be sufficient to restore his exhaustion.

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CF # 249: Then Basil adds many more commendations, always urging that all excess be avoided - as these indicate a spirit not of charity, but of vanity, or ambition - as trying to impress secular guests. Fr. Bertoni then copies *verbatim* Suarez’ conclusion to his n. 10:

‘Finally, St. Basil concludes, each one should be treated according to his actual situation and needs, however, ‘so that the same fare which is placed before all, should also be given to the guest, which would be something of ordinary price, and with minimal shopping. Nonetheless, at table there should always be maintained the necessary cleanliness and elegance, so that we might never exceed our own limitations.

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**c. 7: On Common Recreation and Conversation
[cf. CF ## 250-256]**

This new chapter simply picks up with Suarez’ ‘n. 11’, entitled: ‘The Fourth Means, Conversation among the brethren, at a stated Hour’. The Jesuit theologian points out that this is common with all religious orders. The Jesuit Constitutions take

²¹⁴ Cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 958 a.

this a step further, as would be evident in the Rules for the Rector [n. 55] and those of the Prepositus [n. 56], as follows:

CF # 250: Each day, for one hour after lunch, and another after supper - or, at least a half hour, when supper is abstained from, all the members should come together and converse in a familiar and friendly manner, in the same place if this is possible.

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CF # 251: Suarez notes that the matter of the confreres' health is introduced in the Jesuit Constitutions, but that the principal reason is that of developing charity:

Just as it is unwise to assign so much physical labor that the spirit should be oppressed and the body be harmed, so, too, some bodily exercise to help both the body and the spirit is ordinarily expedient for all, even for those who must apply themselves to mental labors. These, too, ought to be interrupted by exterior activities and not prolonged or undertaken beyond the measure of discretion [cf. CSJ n. 298].

'It is fitting in order to maintain health, but principally for the purpose of increasing charity the rule should be imposed without exception. Since friendship, as Aristotle bears witness [VIII Ethic., c. 5], increases with communication, and is dissolved by taciturnity. And St. Teresa states: 'Charity increases by communicating'.

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CF # 252: Along with the quote of Aristotle, Suarez adds here that of Clement I, Epistle I, where he advises the faithful that by frequent communication among themselves, they intensify fraternal charity. The next few lines, Fr. Bertoni copied for this Constitution:

'The fact that this was the custom in the early Church is quite well known: and something similar was said of the ancient monks, as Jerome points out [in his 22nd Letter to Eusotchius, regarding Custodia, the virgin], where the custom had been to come to the table in groups of ten. After having sung the hymn, or after the thanksgiving, the Saint says: 'Everyone would talk with his confreres until the vesper prayer, and the conversation would be: Did you see this, or that? Have you noted the level of grace in him? How reserved he is in his bearing? And if they encountered one who was ill, they would console him; and if they met one who was fervent in his love of God, they would encourage him to zeal ²¹⁵.'

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CF # 253: For the wording of this next Constitution, Fr. Bertoni skips about three columns, up to mid-way of 'n. 16', 'this is beneficial to anyone who is committed to studies and virtues.' Suarez presents another example of all this in Cassian, where he quotes the Abbot Abraham who speaks of the charitable reception of those

²¹⁵ NB: for St. Jerome, cf. c, 35, t. 1, 117 A; cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 958 a & b.

brothers who come to visit. This might even seem at times to be an interruption. This is what Fr. Bertoni copies ²¹⁶:

'The Abbot, Abraham, is quoted by Cassian [coll. 24, c. 20]: that most welcome respite of relaxation and humanity, which at times may occur at the arrival of confreres, even though it might seem to us to be bothersome and avoided; nonetheless notice how for a little while it is useful and healthy for both your body and soul. It often happens, and I do not mean only for novices or for those who are ill, but also to the most experienced and to the perfect, that unless their commitment of mind is provided with a break through the relaxation of their cares, this would lead to an exhaustion of spirit, or would certainly contribute to their poor bodily health. And as a result, by the prudent and by the perfect, when there intervenes even the frequent visitation of their brethren, these should not only be patiently tolerated but also gratefully welcomed.' All of these are in agreement with our daily period of relaxation provided by the mutual conversation among the brothers, for this respite often has the same goals and provides the same fruit, about which the Abbot continues:

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CF # 254: Firstly, because this interruption moves us to be more avid to desire always the retirement of solitude: for while such respite might seem at times to interrupt our regular routine, it instead keeps us tireless and committed. This routine would be slowed down if there was never any such interval, which could not be pursued through to the end with tireless dedication. Further, the need of physical recreation, provides the indulgence of extending humanity, and this confers upon us greater gains with that more joyful relaxation of the body, than what would be brought about by a most demanding abstention.

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CF # 255: In his n. 17, 'By this means we are also instructed on how to deal with our neighbors. Suarez provides Fr. Bertoni with his important next Constitution, regarding the very **purpose of the community** [he does this again just ahead in **CF # 262**, regarding 'the most ordered nature of charity']:

'Furthermore, since the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this most often is achieved by our conversing with our fellow human beings, and by speaking discreetly and kindly about divine matters. To achieve this, religious confreres can be most proficient in this means, when they are accustomed to holding religious conversations among themselves. These ought to center most frequently on divine matters. Thus, they will learn by practice to be silent at the proper times and will know when to speak prudently and fruitfully, which is the best kind of silence, as St. Ambrose has pointed out [In Ps

²¹⁶ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 960 a.

118, Octon. 2, in the beginning, and the entire excellent c. 10, I, 1st book on the Offices]. He says that Pythagoras imposed silence on his followers, so that he would teach them how to speak by not speaking. David, on the other hand, prefers that we learn how to speak by speaking more, for how can we learn without practice? Or make progress without experience? And he concludes: So, let those who want to learn prudence in speaking, which is prudent, which is more in accord with nature, not neglect it altogether; those they would make use of the proper safeguards.

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CF # 256: For this number, Fr. Bertoni skips about two full columns, and comes to Suarez' 'n. 20', the second impropriety in these matters [the first being that secret familiarity, speaking too much: *that no one should speak, except in passing, and in a few words, and only about necessary matters...*²¹⁷. Fr. Bertoni picks up again at the bottom of this same page:

'Let there be attended to what St. Thomas counsels [III-II. q. 168, a. 2]: so that religious gravity may not be wholly destroyed. And he brings forward a similar sentiment from Ambrose [One, on the Offices, c. 20]: Let us take care, so that while we might choose to relax our spirit, we might disrupt all balance, as it were, the certain concert of good works.' The elegant insight of St. Basil is in agreement with this [Const. Mon, c. 13]: In conversation there should be avoided all clever sayings and vulgarities, and the like. And further on, he states: 'If at times the practice should arise to rid ourselves of a bit of melancholy, we have recourse to hilarity in our conversation, let there be given to this a certain spiritual flavor, and that our conversation be permeated with the Evangelical salt. Thereby all interiorally will be correct, and exteriorally will bespeak of the fragrance of wisdom. This will delight the listener both with relaxation of spirit and a festivity for his intelligence.

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**c. 8: The Exchange of Letters among the Absent Members
[CF ## 257-261]**

St. Ignatius developed what seems to have been a rather complicated system of letter writing between the members of the Society, Superiors and members [cf. CSJ nn. 673-676]. Fr. Suarez treats this under his 'n. 21', of his Chapter VIII of his Book VIII²¹⁸: **'The Fifth Means of developing Charity, the Mutual Communication by Letters among those Absent.'** Again Suarez calls upon the example of 'former times'.

²¹⁷ This is Rule 20 of the Society - cf. Suarez, o.c., pp. 961 a-b. [Translator's Note: Fr. Benaglia seems to have erroneously transcribed *hilaritate* here (top of Suarez, p. 961 b) in the quote from Basil, for *hilaritatem*.]

²¹⁸ cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 961 b, ff.

CF # 257: This communication should not only occur among the confreres which would bind spirits in one heart and soul. There should not be lacking that communication of letters to those who are absent, which would render service to the same end.

This ideal of the **Apostolic Church** often recurs [cf. also **CF ## 189; 196; 226; 259**].

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CF # 258: For this next Constitution, Suarez takes his wording bodily from St. Ignatius' first five or six lines from the Latin CSJ n. 673: Fr. Bertoni takes it *verbatim*, offering his own conclusion: **...prodesse valent...**

'Still another very special help will be found in the exchange of letters between the subjects and the superiors, through which they learn about one another and whatever can contribute to mutual edification'²¹⁹.

CF # 259: Suarez' text then introduces the next wording taken over by Fr. Bertoni with these words: 'Concerning this matter of letter-writing, there still exists from the year 1594, a certain manner to be maintained, and this remains in harmony with this instruction.' For this, Suarez refers to **the example of the Apostles: ...And when they were come, and had assembled the Church, they related what great things God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles...[cf. Ac 14:26] - ... But so that you may also know the things that concern me, and what I am doing, Tychicus, my dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make known to you all things... [cf. Ep 6:21]**

Then, a quote from St. Basil follows, which Fr. Bertoni has copied as his Constitution:

'St. Basil says [Reg. Mon., 70, c. 1]: Whoever by the goodness of God has done some good, he should make the other confreres aware of this, so that the glory of God might be the more widely shared.' And he offers for this the example of the Apostles [cf. Ac 14:26; Ep 6:21].

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CF # 260: This Constitution flows immediately in the text of Suarez²²⁰: he quotes Basil writing to Ambrose regarding the great value of epistolary communication among brothers:

'And so, the same St. Basil writing to Ambrose [Ep. 55] places among the great gifts of God 'that through the conversation afforded by letters, He has given the possibility of mutually staying together with those even separated by the longest distances.' And then within the saint encourages him to this necessary duty of charity²²¹: he says that

²¹⁹ **NB:** this English translation of the Jesuit Constitution here is taken from: *St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary*, by George Ganss, SJ. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1970, p. 292.

²²⁰ Suarez, o.c., p. 961 b, bottom.

²²¹ l.c. the text continues on the top of p. 962 b.

you have laid the foundations of love toward us, strive now to incite and promote this structure by the assiduity of our mutual exchange. For by this pact we will be able to remain united, even though we are distant one from the other in our terrestrial domains by a very great distance.'

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CF # 261: this next Constitution follows immediately after the preceding in Suarez' text:

'Hence, this was also the custom in the ancient Church, that there would be communicatory letters, as they were called, by which the Catholics would communicate among themselves, and in which they would usually offer a testimony of their faith. Optatus makes mention of these matters [cf. 1, 2 de Schismat. Donat.] and Augustine [Letter 163 to Elus.]

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**c. 9: Progress concerning the Mutual Care of Confreres
[CF ## 262-266]**

As has been noted a number of times, this concept of **Progress** - today might be rendered as **on-going, continuing formation, conversion**. As is known, this word is part of the title of Fr. Bertoni's Part IV, on Spiritual and Intellectual **Progress** [cf. **CF ## 47-68**].

CF # 262: in this Constitution, copied *verbatim* from Suarez, Fr. Bertoni makes clear that under the general umbrella that the 'end' of the Congregation is to save souls, the wide variety of ministries must be **accommodated** in accord with the changing circumstances²²²:

'Since the end of the Institute is to work for the salvation of souls, and as a result, seeks ministries that are accommodated to this end, then in the very first place and with more commitment should work for and desire the salvation of his own confreres, than of externals. This is because charity is most ordered. Therefore, just as charity tends toward seeking first one's own spiritual salvation, before that of others - so, too, among these others each must first seek and strive for the spiritual salvation of his own confreres, and that of the entire Institute, prior to that of externs.

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CF # 263: From this there should arise that supreme care and concern which the Superiors of the Community ought to have for the spiritual progress of their sons.

This concern for spiritual progress goes back to the **Compendium Rude** [cf. **CF # 6**] and, of course, **c. 1 of Part IV** [cf. **CF ## 47-48**].

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²²² cf. also **CF # 185**.

CF # 264: for this next Constitution, paraphrased by Fr. Bertoni, Suarez ²²³ quotes 'that Rule of the Society' without giving its number [cf. however, CSJ n. 63]:

'This is also the source of that mutual inclination and preparation of spirit for receiving correction from others, as well as assisting in the correction of others with due charity.'

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CF # 265: this Constitution, too, is a further paraphrase of a 'Rule of the Society' which Suarez does not specify - but is found here in his text in italics:

'Here, too, is the font of that mutual care of one another for favoring fraternal charity through conversations and sermons, and of encouraging one another to the exercise of virtues and perfection.'

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CF # 266: this beautiful ideal, presented by Suarez, from St. John Chrysostom, was quoted by Pope John Paul II to the Stigmatine Capitulars in the audience granted at the end of the 34th General Chapter in February 2000.

There is an apparent problem here - Suarez ²²⁴ cites for his source here John 16: a careful reading of the text would suggest a combination, or summary of these texts from **John 17:11 b, 21, 22: ...ut sint unum sicut nos...ut omnes unum sint, sicut tu, Pater, in me, et ego in te, ut et ipsi in nobis unum sint...ut sint unum, sicut nos unum sumus...** The text then presented by Suarez is quoted as Chrysostom's Hom 77, in John 16:

'In an elegant manner, St. John Chrysostom comments on John 17: 11 b, 21, 22, that they may be one, just as You and I are one : There is nothing comparable to that harmony and mutual union of wills: for one becomes many. For if two or ten are in agreement, there will no longer be one but each one of the members is as though he were ten, and you will find the one in the ten, and ten in the one.'

And further on he points out: This is the excellence of charity, by which pact it renders the one and the many inseparable, and the one is in many places, and could be in Persia and Rome, and what nature is unable to do, charity can' [cf. Hom. 77, in Jn 16].

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²²³ Cf. Suarez, o.c., p. 962 a.

²²⁴ l.c. p. 962 a, bottom.